

Leukemia

the doctor tells me

now

having discovered late in the game—
“myeloid leukemia”

What?

sounds like the title
of a sci-fi movie
not “milord”
not “plasma”
but a “fluid”

rhythm, like
anemia—
you don’t know
that it is there
and now you must
tune yourself in
to it very often

molecules of blood
follows when language fails—
you can’t hear them whisper
to each other while
they wait for the gate
of your marrow to open

how could you?

this punishment
is no innocence
think of what tainted
looks like inside
the body, an army comes
to invade, devouring
as it destroys, with certainty

think of the earth opening
its mouth below your coffin,
which will contain a doll
of your body, the water

will swirl under you
in a white froth, in dark
pockets, like marshes
on the loose wait
for a storm and rain
to rupture, afraid
of losing, the sky
will never try to make
the light stay

then

laughter sends a flood
of warmth up my neck
and into my face
like a branch escaping
in the wind, a big one
free falling, if it wants to,

crash

I feel my face go merlot,
my breath change, my palms
become a flood plain
the bruises on my skin
are not only the broken
vessels beneath the skin
but life heartaches,

I cannot roll the word
“leukemia” on my tongue
like a piece of chocolate
think of my childhood

woven with the present,
as I am likely to remember
a story I am told, as
I am the story I’ve lived,

I am a present person—
open to the moment,
responsive, centered,
apologize for speaking

my truth in outpourings,

unexpected and hurting
like time is the trigger, rhymes
with “explode,” rhymes
with “shattered heart”