

## Everything Is Prep Work

Steady at the counter, knife in hand, crying  
    over cut onion, scooping out  
squash, tomatoes, peppers' never-to-be's  
    stuffed, placental with their hordes  
of seeds, all that tangle whose shape  
when emptied makes the fruit a four-  
chambered heart a four-petaled lotus  
    of womb whose severing takes  
no life. When you are done there  
when you finally put the knife down  
wrap fingers around bulb never seen  
    'til now—all that waiting,  
    that holding out, offering up  
hundreds of tiny ingrown fruits  
    you were doing nothing to—  
every time the sun went down  
    you had to make a meal.  
    You were taught nothing  
        can be cried about  
what never was is no thing  
and it's only a frail human  
    mind twisting itself  
backward for the love of  
    turning into knots  
    just to find its way  
        out again  
    that dwells here  
not over the cutting  
    floor—the oven  
        a poem's

When we go in there  
and take a look it may be  
everything's such a mess  
we have nothing  
to save, nothing we can do  
scalpeled and scrubbed  
but take it all out. It's always a tangle  
at your age, everything battered, scarred,  
emptied out is better sometimes—  
since you no longer need any of it—  
nothing to be missed—  
until we can get in there, no telling.

Womb within womb  
*endo-* womb, within-  
heart, strong but leaking  
how they made her  
always ephemeral, unreal  
without what's within ...

endocarp: end-  
o skin *endo-* womb  
are you one

though you have been  
shedding clockwork-  
tears from inside

skin of my slough  
dripping the heart  
out of the years

disappeared  
the inner door  
insides are

pulled  
out  
of