On a day too dark
to be counted as part of a week,

I use hushed lunch soap
to paste screams to the wall one by one.

The screams look like they always survived here.
The screams look like dried moth latitudes.

The screams have hair and eyes
but no lip-softened mouth

and they look like janitors
mopping the mumbled halls

of toothpaste and deodorant pods.
A man who loves his gun

and blares his gun and blames his gun
ties the one I was to a tree.

The one I was when time still passed.
The one I was when the sunlight was real

and I could hear the sound trees made
clicking their locust teeth.
The one I still am repeats the name
of a woman no one talks about anymore.

He doesn’t ask who will clean
the mess the clock made
on the wall that leads to the days
behind him. He doesn’t ask his money
to return when he places it
in another person’s hands.

And when a man visits
with his guns, the one I still am takes
a scream down from its place and boils it
with a rage of giggling vegetables.

He doesn’t know who’s boiling
the clouds in the already forgotten
sky, but it’s no reason to feel like he’s failed,
no reason to think he can’t cook
for the man who treats his gun
as a child. The screams taste
like something that slept
in shades of orange.

The vegetables taste
like something that sings
in decibels of descending wasps.
Tied to a tree in a forest
without trees, the one I was begins
to blacken into a curtain view.

(And once the one I was blackens
into a curtain view,

that silence will replace everything.)
And because he trusts the shadow-false

mushrooms softening the darkness
where it’s vulnerable,

the one I still am picks at the air
to mute the wishes

of the gun planted here as a child
when the mailbox shells

could be felt groping through
the bone-chalked forest and every house

on a map of screams could be found,
if not saved, by some blank thing that breathed.