

THIS TIME, THERE WAS NO

police officer. No inaudible English
or witness: the word *victim*

was not used at all. This time,
there was no grieving.

No finger pressed into the lip
of a VHS, twisting the magnetic

tongue, the wild chrysanthemums
blooming along my neck. This time,

there was no condom. No name.
The only evidence I have is flesh,

the war that took it all
away, that made this body

of water desert. And here,
swimming in disappearing

dark, where language is neither
feral or enough, I open

my mouth—a fault
line, a tributary, an empty

vase—and unbury you: punctured
photograph, plucked

flower, years of wildfire
& earthquake, child

that could not remain
a child unless cruel & forgetting.

For you, I unbury a mother,
a row of teeth, the slit

of an eye to describe a home
land also split apart. For you,

I reach my hands into this arid
weight and excavate the word

No.