

How You Try to Remove the Soil Buried in Your Fingernails

Don't dwell with your grief inside a room
& take lessons from the compendium
of obituaries locked away in your drawer.

Don't say you feel the loneliness in your head
& open your mouth to the guts of your failings.

You will imagine riding a canoe amidst a cloud
of witnesses ready to sing you into a ditch.
You will remember slicing onions at the kitchen

table & your loss is sliced into every tear
& the tears will be built into a murky cloud around

your home. You will fear the gathering of absence
walking through the loins of your gown & you will
call out your grief with a loud scream & the ghost

of your child will glow into bubbles after a soap
bath. You will remember again carrying your child

at two months, tearing his memories from the photo
album & trying to remove the soil buried in your finger
nails after you clothe him in the soil & lock your grief

in a safe, far away from the fondling of revival that may
brew from the orange tree outside your front yard.