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IDIOMS (II)

Francine Conley

I am told that plates don't talk
nor do trees whimper the chatter
of tea cups.

I am told a father would never
wash his kid's mouth out with soap,
literally.

I am told my form is flabby,
but I should review Plath
or my ex-husband's poems:
he has form down pat.

I am told the speakers in my poems
are maniacs—that my lines inch
problem-to-problem, that I look
inside tornadoes and ignore
the sharp shifts of everyday
life: a maple in its first crux
of green; a window open
at the first blush of spring.

My problem is
I never went to Church.
I never met my mother.
My past is a portrait
without eyes. In fact,
I was born in a motel
named Marooned,
my tongue a lost button
shucked into the pocket
of a cleaning lady

who took me home
and sewed me into
her daughter's unlucky
blouse. Seriously, I mean it,
literally. I was born to be an echo
and seen from far away.

In my final portfolio
the red pen says politely
if I locate my authentic voice,
my poems might find
their true form, tense,
and make more sense.

P.S. *I have promise.*