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The Patient's Swallows Seen On The X-Ray

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Givens: The Patient's Swallows Seen On The X-Ray

THE PATIENTS' SWALLOWS SEEN ON THE X-RAY

SCREEN

Rebecca Givens

Language, we're told, is something edible,
fish being thrown from the pond
and beginning to hum (rather
mythical): language as sharp tips, scales

to eat our meat with, have at the base
of our tongues while food gets moved back
further in our mouths and carriages
of doctors come over to see us

sup: our artichokes raw, salmon nearly
gill-full, green-gold with cherry
tomatoes for eyes

it eludes us, language, though we may eat
and eat, spoon carrots and quantified
mixtures into our throats (a movement we
see on the screen as two black blobs

slipping past the trachea to the
esophagus, open air) we notice what is
dark as it goes down
and try to mark it, though it swims fast,

slips past as soon as the machine
catches our swallow
and moves (quickly) (whirring) away