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## Miscarriages

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Ankney: Miscarriages

## MISCARRIAGES

**CHRISTOPHER  
ANKNEY**

Of justice, of course they've likely sought out why  
God dropped stone relics in their bodies. To deliver  
these thoughts to the world, though, is a sign of weakness.

Or simply a third or fourth stab inside the belly.  
Or simply too large a problem for anyone else  
to tackle, or listen to. Confessions are to be whispered

in the solitary confinement of assembly lines,  
where one only has time to think of going on  
with the company order: noodles, tomatoes, bread

driven off to Indianapolis, Chicago, Cleveland.  
So one grew into the "kooky" aunt who fed her remaining sons  
as if fattening cattle, and they grew into college

football players. The second aunt: a tiny, powerful switch  
of few words, a torture genius at barely five feet  
who can contort an ear into the opposite of origami:

the hurt flies in place of the beautiful swan.  
The third one leaves and returns as often as tornadoes  
around Ohio: always, a minute's wreckage set off

years of repair. Once, she brought a black man home  
from Nebraska, and it was love and bruises  
just as my uncles predicted. Only, their wives were tender

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**Ankney**

**8**

of her surviving pups, snarled and showed  
her teeth when she heard her brothers, having closed up

her heart for her boss—a black man a decade older,  
with a Rolodex of lady names on his desk. Dignity fought for  
at every holiday dinner. Then, there is sister night—

soaking in bathwater, not blessed enough to cleanse  
what's lost. The ghosts crashing off skin, harsh music  
that never escapes the sanctuary of the tub.