

*Pipeline Failure: Sweetwater, Texas*

The failure site is called *excavation*. We have once again  
buried all of our destructions. We act

surprised when — with axe and brush in hand —  
we face the heat that we created from our own

addictions to pressure. Natural gas lines  
catch fire every four days. Locals complain

of nosebleeds in the times between  
explosions. *Geologist* is just another name

for extraction specialist, and everyone I know  
seems to work for Exxon. If you look

at a map of all the pipelines in America,  
Texas is the center of gravity. I cannot escape

the pull south and down — all I've ever known  
is the god we worship beneath our feet.

*A Study in How to Turn*

outside amarillo      oil never      made its claim  
longer than a few      generations      of dried-up wells—  
the pumpjacks      look lonely and old      like they have      no business  
here      so far      north      of the permian  
—this isn't      what west texas      looks like      this  
place      with its flat-as-hell earth      too-blue sky  
sprinkling of beefmaster      cattle      in a field of dried grass—  
today      we are      driving for a hundred miles      beneath wind  
turbines that whirl      in unison      perfect  
and slow      —we think      if someone dialed up      the breeze machine  
they'd spin so fast      they might      lift      right out  
of the clay      float      above the plain  
as a whole      army      of pinwheels      and drift  
into the cirrus clouds      that stir      along      mid-sky  
we don't      know home      anymore—maybe      things  
change      here      and other places      where the wind  
picks up—      but when      in my life      did      this      flatland  
churn      itself      over

## *A Spectacle in Hill Country*

Triple-trunk hackberry trees on the riverbank —snags form  
from their dead. Dried fruits fall, branches break, roots corrode,

but in five years' time, the Guadeloupe will see new growth  
in ugly knotted bark knobs layered back toward center trunk

like hills on a topographic map. Before we ever exposed  
the bedrock, tufts of curly mesquite broke through topsoil,

and limestone remained grounded at the river's edge—its slow  
rippled water sharing back our faces: emerald green.

Now, somewhere along the bend in Kerr where a small camp  
tucks itself into the granite, counselors called *mothers* lead us

in songs. They teach our voices to find cracks in the land, force them  
open, so that we can store pieces of ourselves far below our own

bodies. I sit in the fire-shadow, hold my budding breasts,  
in wonder that this fat fleshy part of me could ever sustain life.