

Teresa Dzieglewicz

Stranger, thank you for giving me this body

to break
on Lakeshore Drive. For the eyes I turn
to the radio as the lady
in the red SUV slams
on her brakes. Thank you for bringing me
into this world,
where my Pontiac crumples
like crepe paper, where the airbag's white fist
pummels my chest and burnt talcum erupts
like confetti, stains my clothes
with the scent of singed hair.

Thank you for my skin against bug-blood stained glass
as it shatters in the strobe of the headlights,
for my legs that still stand, stumble
to the cracked yellow line of my lane, as I mark
its bandage of snow with my heels.
I want to thank you

for the college party
that led to my conception, the cramped bedroom
I can only imagine. How maybe your hands cold as comets
curved against the bend of his back. How maybe your tongue
moved in his mouth — in this moment that leads to your body
weaving velvet layers
of blood into my tongue, the cold bones of my hands.
Those small strands of DNA that swirl in your cells,
replicating to muscle, becoming the thing that moves
me. Stranger, I lie



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in the ambulance, when asked
 for my medical history.
I watch the wiper break geode of city,
 the snowflakes reform
again and again, and I say
 I know anything about my birth mother
but I mean, I've learned no name
 for how we've never sat across a table,
 fingers greasy with fries,
 how it wasn't you who read to me each night,
 taught me to make pizzelles and Sunday gravy,
rushed to the emergency room.
 But still, somehow, I know you

by the beautiful facts
 of my fingers, my cracked sternum, the skin of my chest
 purpling with fireworks of blood.

