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.
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.