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how to immortalize a body // listen: to give attention to one's sound

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how to: immortalize a body

embalming: to forestall decomposition.

begin by washing the body
in germicidal soap. be sure

to massage the limbs—
cooperate with rigor mortis.

then pose the eyes
& shut. make them look
natural.

then—

read to the corpse
the definition of *graceless* &

use an adhesive
to shut the mouth.

listen: to give attention to one's sound

If sounds are only vibrations how are they stuck
inside my head &

why are they telling me how to
unmake my body?

They pulse,
warning me to kneel & pray as though the grace
of the world hangs from my teeth.

The vibrations tell me: my body is condemned—

I pretend like I have an underbite
to resist this instruction

but the voices persist—

my jaw aches.

I poke at my belly button trying to feel

where I came from. I trace my collarbone
trying to understand my slender bone structure.

I look at my hips and sigh
because

I wish I could

go swimming

in a stranger's spit.