Under no circumstances
does the lord request a chicken:

We are eight children in a christian academy
who peered through shell
under flashlight in bathroomed darkness
& we whispered gallus gallus:
    Holy ovoid
membrane illumination
    tree brain
husk of my hand
    Baby.

One day,
you will chip away
at your own house,
& find there wasn’t a better place to be
than before the beginning.
So, we read with you in warm red glow.
(I had no idea then
all my eggs would be this kind of light.
That many things grow in warm and in red
& many things die that way too.)
Only one of you mercied your way out to us
a toothpick boned black slimed squiggle.
Now our lesson, children, will be about death, and no longer about care.

If a chicken could instruct a classroom
we would know how to search
for insects, seeds, and fruit.
We would know how to fly just enough to make it home.
We would be taught that unfortunate lesson about familiarity and contempt.
Invite loss, deny christ, and know the oldest sport has no victors.

We could learn to announce our tissue with the sun—
tell time again. Anticipate dawn before it rose.

Imagine singing every morning.
Imagine acknowledging the audience of stars.
What it would be to have names
not riddled with our modes of production
layers, writers, businessmen, broilers.

I stopped with my family somewhere deep in Pennsylvania
at an ancient burger selling shed
sandwiched between two incomprehensible cubes
pimpled with cameras and haloed with barbed wire.
I asked myself that question of consideration
the lives in those buildings–
The poultry factory across the street from the egg factory.