

on showing up at open mic five days after plastic surgery

And isn't it just like a poet
to stand here, bruises concealed,

but fingering the stitches? Then again,
is anyone ever really sure whether

she wants people to look or to look away?
And who isn't threaded and taped

together by her choices? I didn't tell my surgeon,
but the truth is, I'm hoping for a scar

so I never forget just how open I can be.
So I remember that someone once

looked inside and that now something
will always be missing. Something left

a hole that my body remembers.
I want an even scar—deliberate

and quiet as Braille. One that says
to anyone close enough to touch

that acceptance is a language I speak only
with the heavy accent of agency.

One that says, this
is my body and I decide.