Pertinent Negatives

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i.
Nana Beth is not in Church.
Her grandson finds on the bathroom floor
a puddle of Nana's own.

When we enter Nana's room
one fluorescent orange Monday
afternoon, she is not in any pain.

Except for when she breathes
in her only complaint, a sour taste
in her mouth that won't go away.

ii.
A reconstructed geometry of her abdominal geography:
a gallbladder the size of a deflated beach-ball, an incidental
sliver of the potential space around the apex – it exists
and it is full. Nana Beth is having a bad day – the heart swings.

iii.
Nana Beth's aorta has created
a second path for itself, the aortic
leaflets brush and rustle, act their
name for once, keep her toes warm.

Nana Beth's story bifurcates, segments
of a segment sieved through two
sets of holes, emplotted into two
narrative coagulates, two handfuls

of clots, Nana Beth's chest rises
and falls. How badly the lungs want to collapse,
the chest wall to burst forth, ribs like secret petals opening
to drink the orange stuff of the sun.

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