

Lessons on the Body: How Not to Itch

Someone you don't know is dead,
and now here he is again,
an inching, a chigger in your side,

a midnight glazed sting.
You have learned how not to itch

ink on the underside of skin,
how not to dredge up a boy's cool-
mud hands, smaller even than your own

firm grip on his wrist, guiding,
teaching him the rules of this:

your hide, his seek;
your bare feet dusty
against the bathroom floor, flat—

not like the jagged gravel
as it shifts beneath your heels

on this afternoon much too distant
for his hands to reach.
You have learned how slow

the pulse of grief beats.
Count it out now; again,

again.