WHITE SHIRT

You lived
near the projects, five
months clean. You had Elena glint your hair
with strands of light pulled through a cap.
Your last Dollar Day alive
you bought two bright used dresses,
hung your whites out from your window early
since you'd worked three
night shifts in a row. Tears blew
from sheets, your son's tiny jockeys,
your best blouse. All you keep
beyond the drag and force
and unheard moan is this
bleached tee. White bleeds
from the weave: the slackened
grip, the soaring siren, and the stiff drape
laid across your face,
grit-smeared; and more grit beneath
your nails: twigs scraping,
breath frozen.