Artery (1969–1971)

Like Plath, it began with a finger sliced.
But knowingly. Blood was to be let.
Not even fasting had subdued the metabolic
return, again, of daring freaks of the blood:
it thought it wanted out, then, to fall out

deep into loss. That was understood,
that was the edge she needed
and so far we went with her; she took then
though, her wrists, which were her own,
no one took them from her, in short she died.

Planets may bear life; not she, her delicate continent
held rock and supported nothing
that moved from within itself; much was extinct.
Rock has its own behavior and behaves in beauty:

its demeanors are stress and craze:
it crawls: it buckles and can only refuse.
It quivers on its bed
in stony ways, it withholds
itself, susceptible to robbery and rape.

Pain is constitutive all right, always believe it.
That pain is not precisely constitutive
is only the space we have for excitement and the bad
surprises — compact into the melten core —
On this earth now too much space by one more.