

Patrick Maddock

Chalaza

A swirl of specks—
my dust-filled breath.
My small hand pushes
at the damp, matted bed.
The palm flattens on straw
under the sitting hen.

The hen sits on as though
nothing has changed,
or no hand has
tampered with the nest:
I set the egg in a row
to turn cold on the tray.

You pick it up,
crack it on an edge,
throw back your head
and open your mouth—
I try not to look
at the raw slurp.

Sitting at the table,
I wave it away, hard
or soft—cannot bear
these twists in the rope,
strange attachment
stretching from a yolk.