

Trying to Feed the Baby

Trying to feed the baby
someone left on my doorstep (with a little note that says
“back in half an hour”) takes longer than expected
because she likes what I’ve prepared
but enjoys better the sloop and plosh the puree makes
when she swats or knocks it about.

She speaks in gums, an eatspeak
of earnest nonsense, and breaks loose

with excited punctuating screeches:
St. Vitus’s cherub, writhing in glee.
Then amid her latest syllabic montage
she says, “re-oxidizing”—clear as mother’s doorbell,
giving me a start.

Just that one, hard articulation
like a legbone in her word-salad
that I cut short, asking, “re-oxidizing?”
That stops her but she does not look up.

“Baby, did you just say ‘re-oxidizing?’”

The next smile is not expressive but to herself.
She looks at her red sippy-cup
breathes a few cycles
then sends it whizzing for the floor.