Swallow

Isabella Thomas
There’s a swallow where your mouth
used to be // Isabella Thomas

Its cape like legs stretch the curve
of your lip, I see it dancing on your jaw
chirping words through a sieve so that
fractured letters find each other again
when listen becomes silent
I blame the swiftness of its flight,
freedom unfastened from clipped sentences
and I wonder if ideas glide through the air
whether you’d let them ride on its back
or spear them down with the fork of its tail

I hear through the thick of my thighs
Only when the holes of my ears are wide enough
phrases heard, unheard, then not repeated
and I think maybe a cuckoo has laid its eggs
in the hallows where my eardrums should be
hatching translations born of foreign thought
trailing to the tip of my tongue
sick of captivity they need to be spoken

My parasitic mouth moves in tandem with
the wings that flutter in the space where
your lids and lashes meet
I’m hoping you twist what I say
make a nest from the threads of my phrases
rest in the nuances of my understanding
So then when I speak
Your throat is wide enough to swallow
What’s not easily explained