

CLAIRE CHRISTOFF

Elegy for My Wisdom Teeth

I only saw you once
through the slate-blue glow
of the X-ray projector
but mine was the only mouth
you ever called home.
You hid for years
in anticipation
of the moment
at which I might need to
tear into the raw flesh

of some long-extinct bird
or gnash at the fibers
of prehistoric foliage.
You must feel such
dejection from beyond

as I pulse such greens
in an overpriced blender,
forever replacing you
with electricity
and spinning steel.

I signed the waiver that would
afford you an afterlife of
dental schools and research labs,
but you put up a fight, coming
out in too many little pieces
to resemble anything akin to teeth.
I won't remember you that way,
though. Like the appendix,
the tailbone, and the third eyelid,
you were useful once. And so I

reminisce. I try to grieve the
times we shared as my jaw aches
for codeine and clove oil.
Pain is my only penance
for dealing the coup de grâce
before your roots ever had
the chance to germinate through
my bedrock of bone and gum.
Truthfully, I never cared about you.
But I can never win you back.