

BITING THE HOOK

I speak in a country accent only
when I talk to my parents,
as if to say, *Hello, it's me, your son,
born in Montgomery and raised
in Georgia, the one who left
the "gone fishing" sign on your door
nine years ago when I went drowning
bread*, as I've come to say, because
I still don't have the heart to drown
a worm. Even now I pack the bread
loosely on the hook so the fish
can take it off easily, apologizing
to those who still snag their gills
on the barbs like an accent snags
my tongue when Mom calls, her voice
a lure bobbing in my throat, waiting
for the boy she birthed to bite.

