

Andrea Witzke Slot

The Incubator

Worldworn sleeper, what is tied inside
branches of sapling lungs? Tell me to try
again. To believe in what cannot be seen.
Or touched. That story. Our fingers lean

against your walls of caged glass,
and, inside, mere ounces of flesh
showcase the perfect specimen of
something even stranger than love.

And in what hour of what night was a second
bow pressed to your case, looped around a name
I cannot speak? Who arrived and did I sleep?
No need to tell me, you were born to keep

still as buried faith. Sunbather, go on doing
what you must. Which is to say—do nothing
at all. I'll keep watch as you soak in sun's rays,
bask in an artificial summer that shines day

and night in your bottled world. Let roots unfold
in a climate of change, as warm as maternal soil.
What else can hide beneath carbon's septic stealth?
Your chest answers with a twitch. A whole self

responds. Don't tell me what could have been
or explain what's wrapped inside oxygen's thin
exchange. Just teach me to expect more—not less—
from this unwrapped bundle of earth, bone, flesh.