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from *Four Essays on the Body*

I Malfunction

The body does not know how to die.
The body is a machine for living

and continues to do this even
against its own wishes.

The body can break
through malfunction –

cells that defend, for instance,
can multiply out of control,

devouring the part they used
to protect. Here we see the body

explaining the punchline
to a favourite joke

before reaching it, not knowing
why but unable to stop,

though fear rises, tidal
to the sweat glands,

flooding the tear ducts,
the body keeps telling –

it knows how to do this –
it does not know how to stop.