The Minnesota State Fair’s *Miracle of Birth Center*, sponsored by Subaru

Before I smell it, I imagine
I smell it: copper-slick, torn.
Butter and musk. What gathers

in a working groin. The barn’s
no different from outside, really—
foot-beaten and humid, maybe

a little more soiled—and inside, a cow
heaves curtains of red tissue
from her backside. Quilt of trembling

oil. *Oh, that’s just afterbirth,* the vet
tells me. The cow’s bored eyewhite
stark in her skull. Her chin fretted gossamer.

Nearby, a bursting rabbit endures waves
of toddler palm; if gentle, they receive
a blue ribbon (*First Place in Not Hurting

*Something Smaller Than You*), and I think:
Thin velvet of a lambscheek, for which

my hand also hunger—to touch
what is new and milk drunk. To cup
something pink and cropped, mysteriously

focal. A sign on the wall lists the times
of each new birth: 6:14 AM, three lambs—
Becky, Delilah, Marge—that I can’t see

through the kneeling team of boys
by the pen, their lager-yellow
crew cuts. Only the mother sheep, who

looms to the left. Her indecipherable eye
between bars.