

there is no name for this.

we watched for what felt like hours  
through the chain-link fence  
that fits my son's entire arm  
or just his lips and chin  
his tongue stretched out to inhale  
crushed bricks / wires / roots / someone's  
dead plant / mud / bones / pets' or rodents' / maybe / their owner  
the excavator's overgrown arm  
scooped through grass and soil  
as easily as skin            making room  
for new construction that will tower  
at least two stories above most  
other houses on our block  
*yama* / pit / hole / ditch / trench / crag / crater / *higher*  
my son asks / ravine / hollow / *more* / *more* / his fingers climb  
the fence / he is ecstatic / growing / a grave  
the man in the backhoe's cab  
tips his hat and smiles  
waves as he thrusts  
the whole machine forward  
its giant tires swallowing mud on the brink  
thick legs anchored deep to fight the fall  
the bluff where silt slips down soil walls  
crumbling as easily        as skin and in my mouth  
I taste the rust  
the lines and lines and lines        of bodies        missing  
from this moment when my son's whole face  
is pressed against a fence        ignited by the other side  
and all that lies below  
*ya* / I / me / myself /        / ma / mama / mammal / *YAMA*  
he yells / *MAMA YAMA!* / they don't belong here / ghosts / bones  
should have been left across the water / blacker soil / not this / not this /  
/        /        / red mud / not deep        enough / not past  
enough / not enough / this / is not enough /  
*YAMA MAMA!* / they don't belong / these sounds / so close  
to llama / sharp and comic / comma / drama / I'm laughing / crying /  
gagging / trauma / he can't get enough of it / *YAMA!* / the word / its earth  
sick to my stomach I tore his fingers  
loose from the dust and metal  
and we walked through fresh puddles and debris

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he found a string with two deflated green balloons  
*yayas* he calls them                      the sound  
as far from *sharik* as this dugout is      from Babi Yar  
as he is from the ghosts he doesn't know  
he comes from                      as this house is  
from the bones on which it sits