

Ode to My Son's First Shooter Drill

O shooter drill, I bow to your chipping
linoleum, your three syllables, your rusted

intercom. O shooter drill, for you, *only*
for you, we stuff our offspring into closets.

O shooter drill, I praise too the teachers who
call you by name, refusing *lockdown*,

or *shelter-in-place*, like the teacher who,
crouching in that closet too, surely wanted

my son to stop talking, my son who spoke
early and has been speaking up ever since,

my son who was, at first, incredulous: *this doesn't*
make sense. O shooter drill, you conjure

changelings— this boy looks like mine, but he's
been struck mute. O shooter drill, you maim me

a liar too, murmuring *you're safe, you're safe*
while he sobs into his dump-truck quilt.

If tomorrow I wish to clasp his hand and
walk him to class, I will be the *visitor*

with the high-tech sticker on my left lapel—
my driver license picture color-coded for the

kindergarten wing. O shooter drill, I present to you:
my son, curled up tighter than his own cochlea, now

calcified quiet. O shooter drill —what a shit I am,
silent in my own closets, downing wine and Advil.