

The Weight of a Name

It wasn't the violence depicted
on TV, not bruises, nor scars.
Just fear and shame
 of what
 I let happen

to my body; I knew
I was wrong. I knew
I'd be in trouble. I knew
I was impure. I knew
I became damaged goods.

At tender six,

I didn't want to tattle.

I longed to be swallowed
whole, to be palatable,
 ignorable.
There is no beauty in chewing
childhood wounds.

I never imagined the term.
It only happens one way:
 she asked for it.
I felt complicit, burdened.
The burden, complicit, too,
 in my silence.

With words on my tongue, the weight
of expectation presses me
to cloister pain
 with pretty little words.

I quantify the unspeakable,
unable to assign a name, even
though I see an r-word,
as clear as Rumpelstiltskin.

Will speaking it give me power?