

Basil

I trim stems off my basil plant down
to their woody trunks. Two of the newest tender shoots

I set in water so new roots will grow out of the obligation
the young have to reach into earth and hold it. The smell of dirt

after winter itches the nerves under my skin
in all directions like wiring a house. The roots,

small as veins, color of ivory, through days grow and fill
a small, clear plastic cup like mops in unused water

but really they are octopi and one is reaching
into the head of the other where the ovary is to discharge.

When the cup has, at its bottom, a full layer of milky
tendrils they must be untangled before I plant

each in a small pot. I stretch them apart. Hear
them snap like tiny rubber bands. I can feel the break

vibrate through the small body. Feel it like a muscle
seizing my old dog. His eyes rolled back all white.

I feel it like one remembers. Close them over with the earth.