

Karen Canfield

On the Uterus

*On Friday, June 24, 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade*

I tried to write wildflowers,  
but the petals turned to sand  
in my stomach. Hard lumps  
like cat litter when I heard the news—  
a sledgehammer. I tried to write  
the world safer, but they insisted  
our bodies were to blame.  
I tried to write the word

*clitoris,*  
but they don't know anything  
about that. I tried to write time back,  
but that would be futile, so I wrote myself  
teeth instead. Dark, yawning  
mouth

full of teeth  
like an angler fish. I tried  
to write the world free,  
but they un-wrote the laws,  
so I wrote myself red instead.  
Red with blood and bits  
of uterine lining. The only paint  
I can use that will capture it all.  
Sometimes I wish

I were a sharp rock, a quartz  
crystal, but they want  
to paint me a sweetheart.  
Sweet as roses, red as lipstick,

smiling  
with all the threatening thorns cut off.