

## **“Tonight My Mom and I Make Stuffed Cabbage”**

You, without shelter,  
with your dirty blanket and  
charged blue eyes.  
Someone’s fire  
burns there, not your own.  
Blue burns the hottest.

I, with my serving tray and swollen knees.

You talk to your angels.  
Your voice is peaceful.

Our eyes meet.

You ask where your coffee is.  
When I am confused  
you demand it.

I ask for a receipt.

I walk away  
to bring food to those waiting.  
You, too, are waiting.  
The difference is a  
plastic card and  
pieces of paper.

“Dirty Jewess!  
You’re keeping it from me!”

I laugh and am bewildered.  
No one has ever known  
that I am Jewish  
just by looking at me.

Did your angels tell you?

Or is it that old association  
between Jewish people and  
controlling wealth?

Tonight  
my mom and I make stuffed cabbage.  
We eat with wine by candlelight.  
Orange burns cooler than blue.

We went out to look for you.  
Two rolls, tucked in a bowl.  
They are a scroll left by your sleeping feet.

Flavors and textures swaddled.  
The cabbage is a blanket.

You, with your dirty blanket,  
according to me.  
I, a dirty Jewess,  
according to you.

What can we do  
with all this dirt?

## “January River”

This first Wednesday of the year I pause on  
The bridge, fifty feet between us.  
You're heavy from a rare rainfall, a few notes louder  
On the city soundtrack. Turned January River  
I've lived beside you my whole life and  
Followed your body until it spills  
Into the ocean but I will always be a few states  
Away from calling you home. La Ballona  
Creek, my river, I can't embrace you.  
Rain carries angels' filth over sidewalks and streets,  
All the dirt we don't know what to do with  
Over and over your concrete bed.  
A silver crescent gives shape to darkness. The feet  
Between us are calling my brother, my brother  
Gripped my hand so hard crossing this bridge once  
I saw stars. It is Wednesday and the moon on the water is the same  
From our childhood movie nights; mid-week delights.  
Brother, do you remember watching Little Bear  
Scoop the moon out of a lake? A whole bucket of heavy reflection  
We wondered how he could bear to carry. I think  
You've carried it your whole life. Was it also a Wednesday,  
Brother, when you stood on the bridge alone?  
Would the water have risen to carry  
You to the ocean? Brother. River.  
I will go, now, to that crescent shimmering  
Clean below. The bucket will be heavy and  
I will bear it. Not a silver drop will spill. I will bring it to you,  
Brother, and say, *Here. Drink your fill.*