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ARACELIS GIRMAY

CHILDHOOD

In the apartment with the orange
shag carpet, is one long table
surrounded by chairs,
only four of them matching,
and cups and pitchers and food, and large,
silver plates for sharing, a pot,
a ladle, a child's small and noisy toy,
and all of it empty of people.
Everyone has rushed out hurriedly
in the middle. Somewhere,
that room exists still, floating
toward the sun. The meat
and grapes petrified with years.
The cloth bleached by light
persisting through the windows.
Now the rattling of plates, the clattering
of forks and spoons. Louder to us it calls
the nearer it gets to the end.
It is saying one last thing.