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MELINDA BURNS

KITCHEN STORY

My mothers says she has something to tell me,
turns to me from the stove where potatoes
boil and bump in the pot
I stand still to hear, a bundle of forks
in my hand for the table
You are half Indian she says
and a thrill runs through me
like finding out I'm part dragonfly
But when you go to school, if anyone asks,
say you're of English descent
like my father, not like her
I nod, another thing to know
like keep your dress down
so your underpants don't show,
don't talk about vomit at the supper table,
don't say you're Indian.
I place the fork carefully,
one on the left side of each plate,
as I've been taught.