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Melon

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HONORABLE MENTION
MILTON KESSLER MEMORIAL PRIZE FOR POETRY

Melon

by Eileen Malone

On your desk a jam jar of snapdragons and sweet peas
from my garden, my attempt at an apology
so far, we've gone deep enough into my melon disorder
borrowed nothing from anywhere else

I've already told you how it started when I was twelve and fat
and saw a picture of a model eating a cantaloupe
a goddess slicing into a green globe twined with beige rope
feeding herself a sliver of gold from a scraped, scarred old burlap ball

and decided to eat only melon for lunch
and breakfast and dinner

now, I tell you how I chop the honeydew into chunks
add a fourth of a cup of lime juice
very little sugar, some mint leaves, a blender
pour over ice, serve myself, weigh myself
then retch it all up; how it looks floating down there
bits of battered, smashed, flesh-colored meat
how the fetid odor of melons, tubers, bulbs
rises from the cold white toilet
floats around my naked kneeling form
up and out the white curtained window

next time, if there is to be a next time
I will tell you how someone might have done an awful thing to me
when I was twelve, but I can't tell you what, won't even whisper
those fat and dirty words

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if you promise to do nothing during the whole of our hour
but bring yourself back; if each time you find yourself
drifting away you bring yourself back, if you stay with me
and my secret that can only be detected in the vomit

I will bring you more flowers.