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My Grandmother's Wedding Night or The Old Thresh and Gather

Kate Beles

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MY GRANDMOTHER'S WEDDING NIGHT OR
THE OLD THRESH AND GATHER
Kate Beles

Fingerpress
 over neck veins slow to

bruised-apple-red
 as rotted

fruit falls
 from your eyes.

And you carve
the skin of our babes
from the grain of my words.

So tonight, my swollen
 tongue already sings
 with the post-bitter
 ache—

from a taste of
this harvest—

 its blue skin
blackening into a lifelong

gasp.

Please, step lightly
 my love,

as now
 my breath is yours

to husk down
to the teeth,

strip down
to the hush.