

POTATO SECRETS

A week they lay cribbed in the cool  
of my pantry, secure in their symmetry  
and size, their smooth pecan-colored skins,  
their long Irish lineage. Now  
they push their earth smell into my head,  
an insistent musk reeking of history  
and ethnos. Their heft in my hand insinuates  
gravity, longevity, hints of hidden power.

Darkness activated their eyes; pale blips  
poke out of their sockets. My mother says  
these pointed knurls reaching for new life  
must be dug out: they're poison raw,  
they steal flavor if cooked.

No more lazing in warm hills beneath  
urgent green, their future ends in a sack  
hurried past my cat while their bulbous brown  
origins hiss at me from the oven.

And my mother, humming, prepares to anoint  
their hot finality with her own secrets,  
part buttermilk, salsa and chives.

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--Glenna Holloway