

Unrhymed Entry

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2014SPL HOLLOWAY

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*Walkingtomorning@gmail.com***MOTHER/DAUGHTER BANQUETS**

For tonight's main course
let her remember the days I clung to her
while she shielded me from dragons:

My father's temper, nightmares when I was nine,
a nasty neighbor who thought I stole
his crab apples, a snarling Doberman
chasing me till she ran between us
with a broom. Many dragons, all vanquished.

She knows they're still out there, multiplying
by dark, roaming offices and freeways.
More kinds than she imagines. Sometimes
the fiercest of all is the one inside me
uncoiling to attack her reaching hands.

What makes daughters so razorish at times?
Why must mothers rearrange your cabinets
each visit? Rattling dishes as you juggle
your budget, blowing dust off lampshades as you
dress for a party, reinfecting that ancient cut.

Last year she gave up running marathons
and riding fast horses, but still rummages
my household shadows, roams rooms
looking for itinerant dragons.

I mention her magnificence
with the long ago Doberman. She says
she doesn't remember that at all. She sniffs
at each serving designed for her plate. We dab
at silences with monogramed napkins, clear
the dining room, cram leftovers here and there,
punish each other with after-dinner love.

In mysterious ways
these movable feasts have made us both strong.
The long table is scratched but sturdy.
And without her I would be hungry.