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Thrown Out

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Thrown Out · *Harriet Levin*

Years ago my father threw me out.
It happened when he stopped mentioning the heat,
the smell of sour yams
and the mud caked on the floor.
It happened when he found out
nothing can be covered up,
a bad odor fills every room in a house.
It happened when the windows were closed in the evening
for locusts
and neighbors who watch for the daughter
running past shops,
past the last house in town,
its stone facade fallen to the street in shingles,
past acres of melon
to the channel,
that place of danger,
where hundreds of cuttlefish drown each season,
where Father forbade me to go
those stark afternoons I sat
poking a cuttlefish with a stick,
those evenings I circled the bank
waiting for the shrimpboy,
for his cap on my head,
for his voice rising at the end of words
to which I always answered yes without anger,
our heads thrown back,
our eyes closed to the open threat
because we wanted to know by heart
breakers becoming witlessly, in that moment, still.