

At the old house where I first learned

Momma raised English ivy that grew
tall as me. Hardwood cracks hid acrylic
beads, poly pocket treasure lost in summer
when I first learned to cook cinnamon oatmeal
and buttered toast. I am a chubby kid turned chubby
woman who no longer cooks with butter. I have seen seven
countries but know nothing worse than broken dinner plates, broken

wedding bells. I was eight when
I learned bees lived in the hollyhocks
by the porch, Momma drank her coffee black,
Daddy always worked. Weekends Daddy watched NASCAR,
held bottled coke, kept grease rags in his pocket. Weekends
Momma packed her Chevy, Daddy's hands on the hood *Crystalee*
just come back the moon silver as a bow. Nights I imagine my four-poster
bed has poles like snakes. I think of Momma slicing their heads in the garden.
I am scared of their eyes but dream of their skin—the shedding of things outgrown.

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