

Antiques

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You wonder why you feel a thud
of echoes reverberating in a platter
like the one your aunt filled
with nuts and set on the sun-
topped table next to your chair.

You can't let go of that tea cup
surrounded with clear skies
your parents kept full
on stormy nights
while you read in bed.

You're stung with dust
when your fingers skim
old surfaces and reveal
the patina of your absence
when your uncle died

two years after he climbed
three flights of stairs
to ask you to dinner
because he loved you too much
to do so over the phone.

There are times when the dead awaken—
there are times when the dead breathe—
there are times when tremulous grief
rouses the dust beneath.