

TASSEOGRAPHY

Aunt Vera reads the hieroglyphs
of Turkish coffee grounds.

She sees me boarding a train, wearing
 Father's fractured embrace
 over my right shoulder,
 eyes blinking fast to split
 the salty light in two,
 one sorrow for him, one for me.

She says that shapes of willow trees
 streaming from the cup handle
 down to the bottom of it,
 stand for mercy and peace.

She spots Mother as an ivory cameo,
 a Penelope knitting a shawl,
 silken, diaphanous
 like egg whites beaten to a soft peak.
Her face turned to the road
 waiting for the postman's arrival.

Aunt Vera claims that images formed
 at the rim of the cup should be read
 counter clock to avoid
 future pain and disturbance, but,
 do not worry my love, see here?
 flocks of doves cross
 the linear arc of your soul
 foretelling good journey ahead.

She spies me in a city of money,
 at night, opening a book
 to the page of winter,
 by day, walking the streets,
 strange sounds fall on my ears,
 and enter the chambers of heart
 to warm up their long vowels.

She predicts worry-free seasons to come,
 happiness in the plural of love
 gold leaves hanging by the doorknob
 to ward off evil spirits.

REGRETS

I should have asked you to stay
—the rain was drumming the blues
on the clay flowerpots
out on the terrace.

I did not.

I should have put the kettle on,
a slice of lemon floating
on your mug of black tea
like the full moon we loved
that summer we spent by
the shore of Tavira.

I did not.

I should have tried to entangle
the words spoken in anger,
stifle the name of a late love,
rushing in like the silt
of a raging, red river.

I did not.

The sound of your feet
going down the stairs,
a metronome beating time
in the heart of the house—
marked my loss.