

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.