

On the Death of the Cook
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for my mother

I arrive,
and the refrigerator, full,
hums desolately,
a low drone,
while clustered shallots,
snared
in their wire basket
and past-perfect
winesap apples
artfully balanced
in their ceramic
indigo bowl
exhale
without audience
their subtle
and fragrant
gases.

On the table's expanse,
last night's recipe lies
detached and meaningless
without
the overdue
maestro.

I retrieve it
and find its place
in the neat metal box,
extinguish
the kitchen light.

Outside, night
has consummated
again its numinous
perfection.

I stand, as I recall
she would stand,
facing the southeast tree line
where the faithful moon
rises
in scrupulous variety
and cloud-wrack tracery.

Sometimes she thought,
as I do now,
the far stars
assume
a scattered semblance
of attention,

and believed herself
not alone.