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Father to Son

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TERESA MONTEIRO

FATHER TO SON

I said: Here is an egg
because I love you—
not a supermarket Grade A
large brown, but a perfect
quail egg. Even the shell (though
you'll throw it away) is beautiful—
your fingers around it, warm.

Every day I offered an egg,
or an olive, a jar of olives,
the whole olive grove
if you wanted. But
you feared the work.

Never trusting, you chose
the desert. You chose
a scorpion, a friend
who struck from behind.

Demanding a full belly
you wandered lean and
alert, looking for something
better, but alone, sometimes
meeting a snake.

You were unsurprised,
warned by its rattle,
and truly—it had no interest in you,
you who taste like nothing.