A Refrain in Utero

Kathryn Merwin
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Abstract
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rose hip stew simmered brown
over peppered crayfish— I smelled life
on the windows, grandmother shifting stories
into steam, walls summer-slick
beneath peeling yellow paper.

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I whispered in your cold- 
pressted ear, your stethoscope, I warbled you 
a litany. I kicked you 
in the rib over the julkord, holly grove and caged 
bird: you felt my roots spread. Felt the tide 
rise in your stomach.

We met at the solstice, over lingonberries 
and sweet golden Pommac. I split your body, 
two hemispheres of home, one little moon 
tethered to a planet. I know 
what your heart sounds like 
from the inside.
Kathryn Merwin is a native of Washington, D.C. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *minnesota review*, *Permafrost Magazine*, *Folio*, *apt*, *Notre Dame Review*, and *Jabberwocky Review*, among others. In 2015, she was awarded the Nancy D. Hargrove Editors’ Prize for Poetry and nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She currently serves as Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Milk Journal* and Managing Editor of *The Scarab*. 