**How to Pray for Your Enemies**

 *inspired by Joy Harjo*

Cristina Legarda

First, get the fantasy of vengeance

out of your system. The way

you would core them out

with your sharpest knife,

not even bothering with the peeling

of layers and slicing through flesh

but going straight to the hard center,

seeds and all, to separate and discard

it so you can cut up the remains

and consume them piece by piece.

Then, when you find that the meal

failed to satisfy, you must cry

and cry and collect all your tears

and put them in the sun till all you have

is their salt, and though you might be tempted

to season your victuals with the salt

from your weeping—and how tiny

the heap will seem to you, after all

those tears, a little mountain no bigger

than the print from your thumb—

you must throw the salt back

over your shoulder and walk

in the opposite direction. If you fail

to complete the ritual

the incantation will not work.

Finally, you must sit alone in the desert

where the day is blistering and the night

cold as ice, and there, in a vision

across the campfire you built,

beneath the night sky that covers you

with darkness and light, you must see

the crying child, the hungry, crying child

hiding behind your enemy’s face;

you must cradle this child in your arms

and rock it to sleep pressed to your heart

whispering in its ear

*I wish you well*

*I wish you well*

*I wish you well*

until you no longer wish

to cut out your own core;

until the child inside you

weeps no more.