**Letter Home**

Karen Poppy

You ask how I am, otherwise.

Well, fruit tastes differently here, like

Someone else’s skin. Too vibrant,

Too ripe, and not quite right. Otherwise,

This place sits in my mouth like that fruit,

Something I’m unable to swallow, not mine,

Or anything belonging to me.

I have misgivings, otherwise.

The police, with their metallic smiles.

The fear of roundups here too.

The burning hatred of a thousand suns

In people’s eyes against The Foreigner.

Then, there are the everyday things,

So little, I shouldn’t mind, otherwise.

The direction of the house, darkness

Falling in the wrong rooms at the wrong

Times of day. Light batting curtains

Much too early. My mouth tastes funny.

Like someone else’s mouth. Otherwise,

It is fine, I suppose, my home

Away from home. You say, stick it out,

But I’m out too long, like when you pick

The wrong book or the wrong person

And decide to bear it out.

You cannot go back again.

Committed, there is no way home.