**If a Poem Could Feel its Weight**

Rachel Kuanneng Lee

i think about what it means / to be wanted / the sepia photograph / her in the white blouse / stuffed at the shoulders / him in the oblong / spectacles filling / half his face / he is walking towards the mic / to her / you could say this / i am the result of years of want / that day / someone catches the light / it marks / the laugh-lines crinkling their cheeks / all the stage they stand on / is theirs / when she tells this story / he is *this* close / to singing to her / when she tells another / in that self-same moment / i am the idea /of a poem / i am its weight / the French say *tu me manques* / which means *i miss you /* but the words say / *you / are missing from me* / from this angle / you can see / in the space between their gazes / an absence / a missing-from-existence / is that the same as wanting? / i heard this story from a Korean teacher / one of the students in her beginner class / held out a bag of chips / asking / 선생님 / 원합니까? / which sounds something like / Madam / do you have a longing / for these? / the advanced class / would laugh / because by then they knew / what a dictionary wouldn’t tell you / that in this language wanting / a chip is not the same / as being wanted / longed for / in each language / i find new ways / to conjugate wants / say / i want / you want / they want / they meaning the man / and woman / in the photograph / from where they stand / the space isn’t a space at all / you see quite clearly / that it is filled with that sparkly / agglutinous thing / called love / you think there is too much / room between their lips / and perhaps that is where / the want resides / the question remains / how do you begin /to become all / they have ever wanted?