

The Poem
For Dunya Mikhail

There was a poem I started, it had one good leg.
The poem I lost.

There was a poem that surfaced
between breaths, in the grounds
of my coffee pot.
The one that seemed to want to run,
the one that had no shoes.
The poem that went its own way and
never came back.
There was the poem he wanted me
to write—or she, or them. The poem
that everyone hated and kept at a distance.

There was the poem that came disguised
as spam, the poem that got stuck
in my teeth, and no one bothered to tell me.
The poem that I scraped
like burnt toast into the trash.

There was the poem that sounded
like a bed hitting the wall, the one
that everyone thought was something else.

There was the poem with too many tropes,
the one that danced for the wrong audience,
the poem that expired before we could drink it.

There was the poem that needed birds
or something wet to finish it,
the one I ate with the smallest spoon.

There was the poem my friend told me
was waiting for me. I saw it in the window,
slowly lifted my hand to wave,
but the light changed
and one of us looked away.