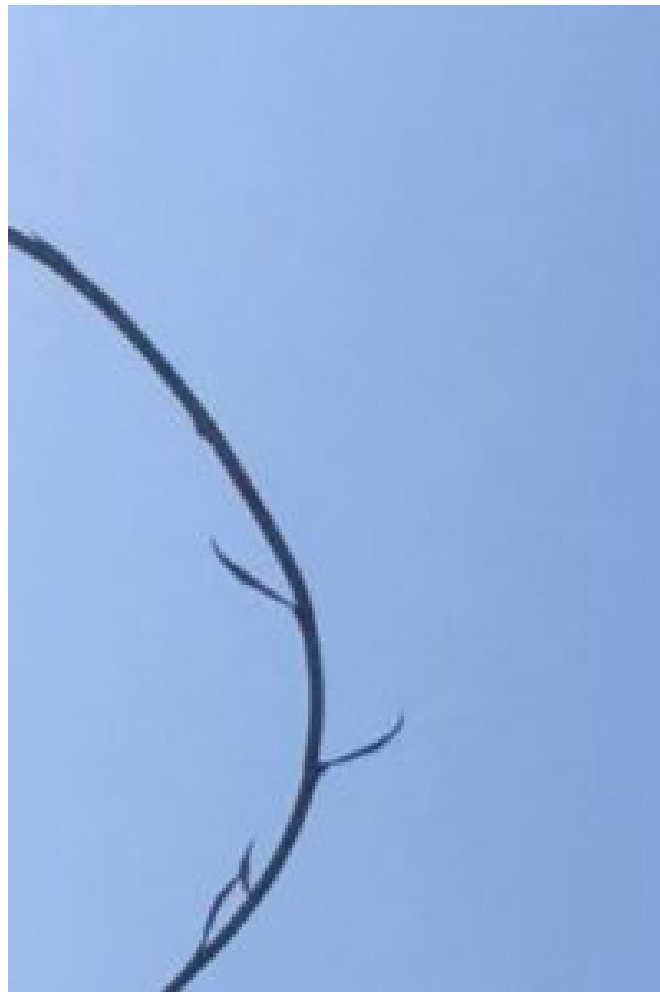


New Poetry from Jeffrey Kingman: “Matriarch,” “Josephine Marcus Earp,” and “Marching: Sophia Duleep Singh”



OCCASION THE BELLY / *image by*
Amalie Flynn

MATRIARCH

ninth great-grandchild
spits up peas
seventh and fourth

declare themselves winners

I bundle the children into categories
high-shouldered daughters gobble minutes
trikes in the hallway

my sidewinding wisdom
laughs into a hanky

why is it I depend on the perpetual
tweed skirt

try reading
a mother
nursing triplets

attagirl

I suppose getting it right doesn't matter
pull the flowers from the earth

an isolated pea is a tiny thing

JOSEPHINE MARCUS EARP

cowboys were the bad guys
one cow hides behind the last one
it was a bad sum
inaccuracies plus chickens

instead traded on horse hooves
kicked up dust and stray dogs

she wanted to be
taken seriously
staked instead a vagabond

her husband's posture straight to the sky
pointing now to the headboard

the tombstone didn't think of her
left with her own version
they rifle through the undergarment drawer
for the sheriff's girl

MARCHING: SOPHIA DULEEP SINGH

voice rattles
a high window
the lyric ricochets
then straightens
to the upper register

breath comes
from the diaphragm
for the belters
on occasion
the belly

trailing skirts out of fashion
wives sing wild
wrapped in bedsheets
to jump from a crawling baby
is not a dance

talk of a women's parliament
words are for lemmings
feet do the work
until the pointlessness is stiff limbed
dogged bobbys
the street scuffle an avant-garde
ballet

she fell down during the struggle
mud on her dress