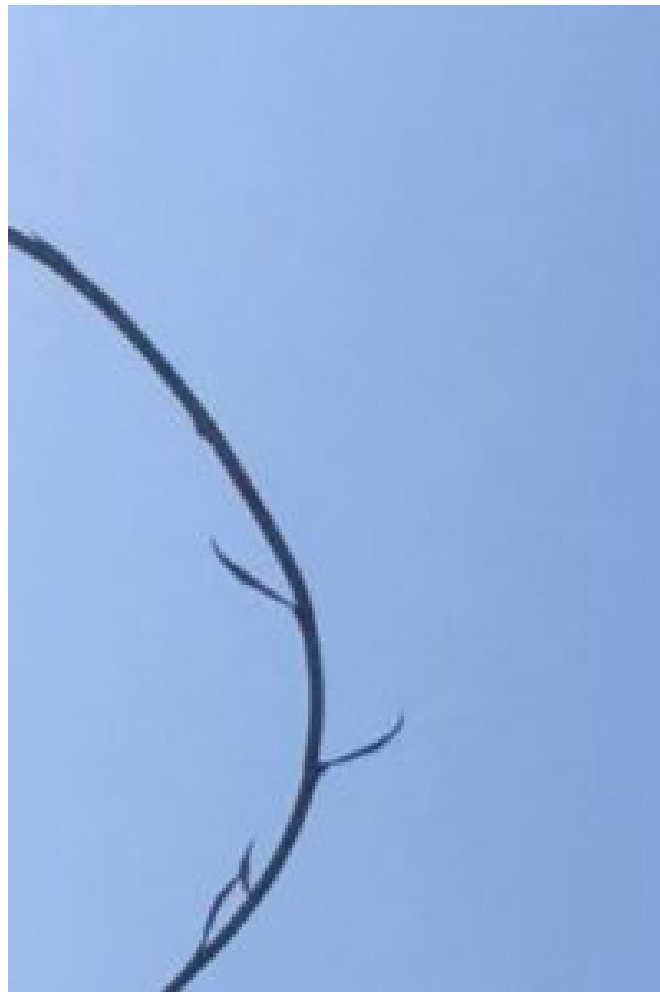


# New Poetry from Jeffrey Kingman: “Matriarch,” “Josephine Marcus Earp,” and “Marching: Sophia Duleep Singh”



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

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# New Poetry from Laura King: “Orange”



MY ACIDIC PAST / *image by*  
*Amalie Flynn*

## ORANGE

It's June, and a few stubborn ones  
still hang on the trees.

We stand on the back of the pickup to pluck one—  
so easy to peel, this old girl the sun has sugared  
since December's sharp tang.

Now it's sweet as honey, sweet as candy,  
sweet as that boy child

who wrapped himself up in his binkie,  
his raw thumb firm against his upper palette,  
who sat on the stairs facing the wall  
because I'd snapped at him again.

Why was I upset all the time?

Though everyone forgives me, no one forgets  
my acidic past; bright orange, raw rage.

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**New Poetry by Rochelle Jewell  
Shapiro: “Each Night My  
Mother Dies Again”**



FALLS ON NIGHT / *image by Amalie Flynn*

## **EACH NIGHT MY MOTHER DIES AGAIN**

Each night the phone rings—

*Your mother has passed.*

Each night I expect to be relieved, but night falls on night.

Each night she is the mother who makes waffles,

batter bubbling from the sides of the iron, the mother

who squeezes fresh orange juice, and serves soft-boiled eggs

in enchanted egg cups. Each night I squint into her face

as she carries me over the ocean waves, her arms my raft.

Each night she refills Dr. Zucker's prescriptions

for diet pills and valium. Each night she waters her  
rosebushes

with Dewar's. Each night I see her hands shake,

her brows twitch. Each night she adds ground glass  
to the chopped liver, rubbing alcohol to the chopped herring.  
Each night she puts a chicken straight on the lit burner  
without a pot. Each 2:00 a.m., Mrs. Finch from 6G phones—  
*Sorry to say your mother is naked*  
*in the hallway again.*  
Each night my mother is strapped into her railed bed  
at Pilgrim State, curled into a fetal position,  
her hands fisted like claws.  
Each night she calls to me  
from her plain pine coffin, calls me  
by the name she gave me, the name  
she hasn't forgotten.

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**New Poetry by Emily Hyland:  
“Rehab Day 1,” “Rehab Day 4,”  
“Rehab Day 9,” “Rehab Day  
11,” and “Rehab Day 19”**



THAT PARTICULAR REGION / *image by*  
*Amalie Flynn*

## **REHAB DAY 1**

He hadn't told me, hadn't stopped drinking  
drank beer in the hallway near recycling

where people bring garbage and broken-down boxes  
he guzzled, and I was here on the other side of the door

thinking him sober,

reversing redness and the inflammation  
from an otherwise young and healthy liver

and *I* was sober—

how would it help for me to sip a glass of wine



while he drank water with our chicken piccata?

My first thought after drop-off was rebellion

to pull the cork from a long glass throat  
and pour full garnet into stemware

I wanted that right again. In my home  
the right again

to not finish a bottle and know  
it will still be there in the morning

Then I felt a kind of shame

I checked him into a rehab facility  
and all I could think of was wine

to unleash my desire for want

drove hours home like a Christmas-morning kid  
thrashing through ribbons and crinkled paper

so soon as it was in sight  
enrapt and hungry for vice.

#### **REHAB DAY 4**

He's been in rehab four days now, four days without hands on  
my body

how indulgent that every day I've had hands plying my nerves  
into delight

delight like the tickle and lick of sharing a bed with the  
same person

and when I finally call my dad, my dad who I'd been avoiding  
telling

I tell him how lonely it was to arrive back home after leaving  
him there

with nurses in their face shields, yellow gowns, and their  
masks

and the globe eyes of his counselor, who stood just back on  
the sidewalk

and my dad says with unintended harshness that he takes back  
as soon as the truth hits the mouth of his phone: *You don't  
have to tell me that*

*at least he's coming back* and I imagine him there alone,  
barefoot

in shorts with a solid color shirt, some sort of mauve,  
doodling spirals

and checker-box patterns at the kitchen table on a yellow  
legal pad

in felt-tipped pen while he talks to me, and I remember how in  
the month

between funeral and stay-at-home, he was well-booked—every day  
somebody stopped by with a crumb cake. Baked goods multiplied  
on his countertop: cookies mutated into blondies into muffins  
into baskets

filled mostly with crinkle paper with pears and crackers atop  
and underneath

the suffocation of plastic tied with ribbons. We worked in  
shifts

so he would not be alone, alone where he watched her for  
months and months

and months and months, he danced with her bald in her walker.  
Oh, how

she resisted that walker until she fell over! How there was a  
friend each day

on the calendar for lunch, how we took turns staying the night  
frying two eggs with toast in the morning—he always ate  
breakfast—

the plate hearkening back to the diner in Waldwick. How he  
does not have a return.

My call—a child seeking solace from a parent who only  
understands

in the way the child will only know as real in some future

hard to materialize in the livingness of abundance and  
relative youth

how he too was young once with a wife who had long hair she  
permed

curly and he would tug on her locks under their blankets. When  
I say *future*

I see Jim again, clear-eyed with warm hands playing my rib  
cage,

The National on in the car as we drive up 95 to some version  
of our life

twenty-four days from right now.

## **REHAB DAY 9**

of course the doctor finds a cyst

on my left breast uphill from sternum  
rolling around like a glass marble  
of course this is the first day he calls  
of course I cannot tell him this news  
washed from normal humdrum stress  
he swims in progress  
and my secret would not serve him  
any more than it serves my own  
malicious asshole cells  
dense like perennials since puberty  
of that particular region  
of course I cannot even examine  
the terrain of my own human lumps  
with one arm raised like a branch  
fingers ambling around suspicion  
every time I've been terrified  
I'll find what mom found  
and it all feels like oatmeal anyhow  
and he's helpless from there anyhow  
to distract from my cycle of peering  
into imagined crystal balls and storylines  
seeing only the worst, seeing coffins—

if he does not know he cannot worry  
and I cannot put that upon him now  
make him worry for me  
while he does so well in there

## REHAB DAY 11

It's time to take the IUD out.  
This is what I think about today, my body  
doesn't want this preventer centered anymore.

I remember the day it went in:  
man-doctor's hand inserting copper  
I winced. He said *I know, I know*

generic bedside assuaging  
irked my nerves I sharpened back  
*No, no, you actually don't.*

And mom came along for support  
all frail in her bird limbs, climbed broken  
into a chair next to me at the outpatient place

and pain got to the point I needed her hand  
to squeeze like citrus pulp out of my grip  
as something external opened me up—

I want to be opened from the inside instead  
dragged ragged in the riptide of giving birth—  
I realized I'd break her frame of softening digits

and knuckles of chemo bones if I juiced  
so I unfelt her skin and took hold of my gown  
wrung into wrinkles and sweated holes

it's only a sheen of thin paper anyway...

When he comes back, he will come back  
to some levels of absence—and so in turn  
  
open space comes back in, to come in  
like syrup into my hungry self.

## **REHAB DAY 19**

His absence heightens hers  
so this is how I communicate with mom

I feel each breast one by one smushed  
between a plastic pane and its baseboard  
goosebumps prickles against machine sounds

in a room alone with the rumbling  
inherited path toward lobular cancer

where will my tissue light up a mammogram  
like a late-summer campfire sparkler?  
Today the ultrasound is a shock

The technician skates a roller over my mound  
and I see with clarity a round black orb

She talks to me lump to lump  
on the same table she undid her robe years ago  
except her skin puckered like a citrus punch

breast vines weighted  
by clusters of rotting berries, overripe

mine are bright on the doctor's screen  
netted fibers the rind of a cantaloupe's dry skin  
I see roadways toward lactation

and roadways toward demise  
and this marble eye from god

like an omen is benign  
has come out as a reminder  
of how to spend my days.

*\* Variation on second line borrowed from Barthes's Mourning Diary*

*\*Last line borrowed from Anne Dillard quote, "How we spend our days is how we spend our lives"*

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## **New Poetry from Amalie Flynn: "Married"**



MARRIED TO A MORNING / *image by Amalie Flynn*

*For twenty years* I have been married  
to a morning. Of blue sky that stretches  
and pulls across me like water filling up  
a suburban swimming pool. The pit that  
formed a hole. The bodies falling down  
as if bloodless dolls instead of kneecaps  
and muscle shins and thighs hot fingers  
letting go of metal or chests and ribs an  
artery that runs down the length of a leg  
like a hose cheeks that hold in teeth and



tongues jaw and soft palates or a brain  
inside of a skull. How the sky was full of  
bodies so many falling thoughts fell down  
or how the word *land* crashes and breaks  
breaks and breaks apart on impact. How  
the day still drowns me.

Today my husband is crouched in our  
garden calves flexed. Today I reach out  
and I run my fingers across broad fields  
of skin between the shoulders. Shoulders  
of my two sons. And I know.

How I know beneath.

We are bones.