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Those Who Wait

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THOSE WHO WAIT

Barbara Armbruster

She waits
for the cake to turn
golden brown,
pull away from the sides
of the pan,
spring back lightly
from the touch
of her finger.

Somewhere
someone's sister
waits
for the cold, clear fluid
to drip-
like a slow-sliding tear
down the cheek of a child-
from the visible heart
impaled on a pole.

To another place,
a school girl waits
with a transparent-windowed
envelope
held against her chest,
eyes closed,
like a magician
hoping to change
one thing into another.

Up north,
squatting on the thick
soles of his boots
beside the neat round
hole in the ice,
a man waits
for the salmon of wisdom
to send a tugging signal
from the underworld.