

My Mother Hates Beans

by Tamar Love Grande

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Growing up I never had them, only
rice: boiled, fried, pilafed, sautéed—
infrequent potatoes

(her Irish mother made potatoes: scalloped, fried, boiled, mashed).

The same with beer, tomatoes, broccoli.
Coffee. Certain custard desserts.
Her tastes, strong, as her will.

My tastes, pre-fabricated:
I abhorred beans.

An intolerance of vegetables-green-tomatoes,
the flavor of beer, the chicory tang of coffee.
My mother's voice from the plate,
rejecting the texture, the savor.
In my mouth, smooth foods became rough.

My first plate of heirloom tomatoes.
Here, in my mushroom kitchen. Green,
thick, acetous. Strings of basil. Oil. Slabs
of mozzarella. Small pickled blossoms
you fed me on a tiny fork.

My tongue, alive. My taste, born.
Tomorrow I will buy beans-red, black, dried, refried.
Buttons of lentils. A bag of hard pintos.
I will buy a hambone, I think, and beer bread.

We will sit and husk
our mountains,
our piles of luscious beans,
and I will take your hand over the bowl,
and I will kiss your fingers.