

Daughterhood

I call my father on Sundays to ask for recipes:

how to mix together my love and wanting into

a bowl, steam it with dates and ginkgo leaves. Every

so often, I see myself in a mirror and stare. I am not

the daughter my mother made me to be. Even the room

I live in feels too cagey—the floor covered in wax &

the skin I shed in waking. All day long I sit by lamps,

let the suns settle behind blinds until the only light left

is a mirage of warmth and the time I sacrifice to grief.

When my mother comes, she sighs and begins to clean.

She's used to it by now, this pile of ash and smoke, tenderness

walking. I open up windows to breathe and only

when she leaves do I close the walls between myself and

my apologies. Mother, you ask if I want to be mended.

Of course I do. But I can't find the parts of myself

in what isn't lonely.