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Best Intentions

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*For not from the east or from the west
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up. . . .
Psalm 75:6, RSV*

So I gave you the stove. It took a wrecking
ball almost to unsettle the old one
so tightly snugged in the baseboard counter.

After ten years of marriage, I could think
it had grown there. You halted me, unbalanced
as I was, to dump the drawers in a headlong rattle.

I eased the lumbersome thing through the constraining
doorframe of the kitchen, built nonstandard, off-plumb
like everything else in our century-old farm house.

You had often fussed about the old stove's eyes,
how they lost their heat, how you had to shake up
a pot to reestablish a connection, keep things hot.

I took your complaints for dissatisfaction,
thought the surprise would please you, as I mean
to please you. You crumpled with your cookbooks

in the floor like wreckage, crying over the change.
There was no drawer to hold your tested and untested
recipes, no assurance that the gleaming new surface

would stand abuse, no guarantee a cake would rise.
You were the one down on the floor, fingering the black
tire mark of the handtruck, but I was down there with you.