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## After Dinner

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# Maysa Vang

## After Dinner

In the kitchen, my father sits overlooking  
soiled plates and spoons, aware  
rats creep between the walls and  
ants feed on the leftover rice.  
Flies linger around ceramic pots to his left,  
circling around his mute face.  
I glance over from the sink in between  
scrubbing and rinsing as he listens  
to a static broadcast about the old country,  
eyes fallen into a slumber, still awake.  
He ponders the cornfields cricketing,  
the harvest of his youth, juices  
of hand-picked cucumbers, ginger, cantaloupe,  
savored slowly on his tongue, remembering  
untainted moonlight, rushing river  
music, miles of earth wet under the soles  
of his feet, and once when the hunter's  
black sky was so pure  
he could've drowned,  
but learned to swim in the dark, to live  
at ease and drink from creased banana leaves.  
Now he sits alone at the table, blue  
veins and blemishes bulge from hands  
long fingering poverty—freed  
to teach me, it's more than enough—  
plates, spoons, rice, and walls.