

Let Cool Before Serving

After Natalie Diaz

The sky blooms dark and purple like a bruise
on this Thanksgiving day: the one
 just before my brother goes to rehab—
 but we play make-believe like children.

On this Thanksgiving day, the one
when my mother salts each dish with tears:
 we play make-believe like children—
 dust off the gold-rimmed plates but not the knives.

My mother salts each dish with tears:
a family-favorite recipe, passed down through generations.
 Dust off the gold-rimmed plates, but not the knives—
 wash up, sit down, smile wide.

A family-favorite recipe, passed down through generations:
Remove from heat. Let cool before serving.
 Wash up, sit down, smile wide—
 the sheriff's car already carving up the drive.

Remove from heat. Let cool before serving:
Maybe it's not too late to pretend-away
 the sheriff's car already carving up the drive—
 to give thanks for one last perfect, family dinner.

Maybe it's not too late to pretend-away
The blooming dark and purple of my bruise:
 to give thanks for the one last perfect-family dinner—
 just before my brother goes to rehab.