

CUPPING

A quiet fire brought it back, how
at night Dyuk let him into the attic;
and the strong uncle from the forest

(who gave the guns to my father),
my uncle Fromtchie falls, lies sense-
less eight days with a fever; there

being no medicine, just herbs, and
no doctor to be trusted, we're hiding,
my mother asks Dyuk for some glasses,

a spirit lamp; they try to put me to bed,
but I watch as she bares his back
and heats the glasses, two shatter,

and with a face I do not recognize
she puts them on his back, jam jars,
big glasses, he squirms -- they burn,

Aunt Nunia puts a gag over his mouth,
the small boy watches in lamp light
the flesh and blood rise; red welts,

and Uncle Fromtchie falls, sweating, asleep.
My mother cried -- she held me -- it was
the only thing she knew she could do,

and she hurt him. Long after the war
I saw a fine set, gleaming in a wood case
with an Edinburgh label, cups of all sizes --

every one smaller (though I had grown)
than what was given my mother,
And tongs to hold them; she had none,

nor chemists' hands. After the war,
in New York, Fromtchie/Frank ran
a small factory making hard candy,

he let me watch the food color mixed
into molten sugar, sweet spaghettis
extruded from the ovens, spun by hand

like Venetian millefiori, to be cut warm.
I asked him "Aren't you afraid of being
burned?" and he smiled. Then there was

partner trouble, and one night, in a four-
alarm fire, the factory burned. A caramel
fire, I wondered? And where his scars were.