

## BAPTISM OF SALT

What do you hold prisoner  
behind your budded eyes?  
Does it count the days with hash marks

on your soft inner walls?  
Is it bathed in lime-light,  
or are you filled with darkness?

I watched Grandma peel  
your mottled outer skin;  
the earthen smell on her hands,

wet, white broth  
running through her fingers.  
How little you resisted the blade-

sliced half, and half again,  
thick white stains on the knife handle-  
my fingerprints.

I remember piecing you back together  
to keep from turning,  
the ring of foam inside the pan,

the smell you released- like birthdays.  
We threw away your map  
of dirt-filled gashes and curls.

I give you in return  
a baptism of salt  
and a new dark place to hide.

—*Amanda Shrader*