

IN MY SOUL THERE ARE A THOUSAND OTHER SOULS

In my soul there are a thousand other souls,
packed together cylindrically,
like corn.

After every meal,
their fragile barriers crack
and out pours a gelatin of lucky days and mom's smile.

Yesterday, barefoot, I ran a mile,
urging my tongue to unhitch
the kernel worn by
my left molar.

An earworm, meanwhile:
Step on a crack, break my mother's back.
I'm fairly sure
I broke her with my jaw.

Returning is an illusion we can't afford,
one thousand souls can only move forward—
thriller dance under ghost lights;
popcorn revival in preschool classrooms;
mom and I chewing on glowsticks,
right there: her amphibious veined foot.

Miles later,
on my back,
I crack a smile:
the thousand souls escape my soul
and for a thousand years
corn is the reward
mothers feed their children.