

## age's touch

my grandmother's eyes are sunken in, hollow;

two boulders digging holes into a cave.

her hair is the colour of burnt wood.

she has swimmer's shoulders, so unusual and unexpected for someone like her.

her knuckles are white, the bone evident, jutting out under her skin.

when she speaks she demands respect, expects to be listened to and perhaps even understood, and you have to interrupt her or *wait* to speak.

i have noticed a particular liking for mimicry;

when i raise my eyebrows in disbelief to encourage the conversation in which she is sharing a story, she will in turn raise her eyebrows, and enough wrinkles will appear on her forehead to make any elephant jealous.

i would say she talks a lot,

but that would make it seem as if her talking is annoying, unwanted.

there's a lovely word for it in my home language, *loquace*.

she makes meals go on forever;

when eating her yoghurt i thought the pot was Marry Poppin's umbrella;

it seemed she always had more to eat.

my grandmother has a peculiar habit of observing her food like it's the first time

she is seeing it; as she lifts her fork to her mouth her eyes hone in on the food

and she appears as concentrated as if she were solving a complex mathematics equation,

as if nothing can fall off the fork or spill off the spoon.

at the end of a laugh or sentence she sucks in air through her teeth noisily.

we had salad tonight and i am reminded of a strange – but amusing to my inner child – custom of my home country, whereby you are not allowed to cut the lettuce in your plate with your knife;

if the piece is too big, you are to fold the lettuce in half:

to cut it would be an offense to whoever made the salad, as the action of cutting is an insult to the cook by saying *you do not know how to make salad, your cooking is not right, the lettuce pieces are too big.*