Birthplaces Shaheen Virk

And what of salmon swimming upstream
Whispering home home home
The water whispering back in an immigration marco polo

And what of us bowing under cottonwoods and cedars Seeing salmon for the first time We remember what it smells like to return home

Count the salmon on your finger joints, They swim lazily in circles waiting to die The motion of the water is a graveyard homeland

Like memory that sits just below the surface of water
I think of earth, in its sedimentary form, flowing against
the scales resisting
each push

back

Grandmother asks how we've been So we talk about the weather, the exams, and the cold

And grandmother tells us of the paranthe she made, the way the winter doesn't bite (as usual) the way things are good

(Because they are good)

We say we miss it all we say we'll visit soon