

Shevaun Brannigan

I Want to Write a Memoir

Except all I remember are dreams.
Last night I was in Yemen on a mosque's roof
with my mother. The sky

was a jawbreaker being sucked on by God—
cherry red so beautiful I could taste it
giving way to the dark grape of night.

Arabic broadcast from speakers mounted
to the corner of each building—
the whole city was praying but us.

Below, thousands of people lay pointed
toward Mecca. Minarets and domes
stood stark against the sky.

Look! I yelled. But my mother was sleeping,
slumped over like a half-empty sack,
her mouth open. I want to say

the prayers sounded from her mouth in that moment,
that I saw her as a vessel of God's,
but I confess this did not occur.

The whole sky had turned black.
My mother became a candle
with two lighted wicks.

These were her eyes.
They would not be extinguished—
even the wind singed itself trying.

