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postmemory

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somehow
I have always known
what had happened here
maybe I overheard it
in my mother's womb
maybe she overheard it
in her mother's womb
and her own womb
whispered to me
what had happened here
this place is my womb
as it used to be theirs
I have fed on their bones
and dreams
reluctantly and insatiably
a blessed curse
a cursed blessing
somehow
I have always known
that I should seek out their presence
in the night sky
rather than in muddy soil
somehow
I have always known
that I should sense their presence
in wildflowers
rather than in their crumbling possessions
those who walked my paths
whose eyes turned into sand
whose fingers turned into tree roots
whose voices linger in my dreams
whose dreams linger in my memory
once
gazed at the same sky
and touched the same wildflowers
somehow

Image: Selection from "Succulent Frenzy," [Edgar Castrejon](#),
November 26, 2017

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that I should sense their presence
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rather than in their crumbling possessions
those who walked my paths
whose eyes turned into sand
whose fingers turned into tree roots
whose voices linger in my dreams
whose dreams linger in my memory
once
gazed at the same sky
and touched the same wildflowers
somehow
I have always known
anticipated, missed, and dreaded

the same fate
seeking a refuge
in the night sky
and in wildflowers

Alicja Kusiak-Brownstein is a historian and native of Poland who has been living in the U.S. since 2003. A graduate from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor with Ph.D. in history, she has taught at the University of Notre Dame. She now studies psychotherapy at the University of Chicago. She has published extensively on history, feminism, social issues and the fine arts. This poem was translated from Polish by the author.