

Rising to Recovery

Adam Jonas

the kitchen is kept as clean as her hospital room.
white linens and chrome utensils, plastic measuring cups
serene and neat, efficiently arranged
the cold room waits for her to return
and when she does, she starts slow

low heat,
warming the mess in her mind

her heavy pot holds
lethargic milk simmering
around one stick of salted butter

its denied layers of delusions, hallucinations
melting down
until only an elongated pill firmly remains
floating a top,
a slight stir of a whisk
swirls it away

she lies down while the liquid cools
in a silent hour
the yeast gradually
rises

fractured, incohesive,
whole wheat flour, thoughts
sift
delicately snowflaking over the still pool.
adding the yeast

she confronts the family recipe,
with clean hands
mushing into the mixture
squeezing and pressing the ingredients
from her disjointed mind

working through thoughts
sticking to her fingers, she forms a ball
holding together,

they rest.

she kneads.
forcing the ball into the wooden countertop
controlling and deflating its elasticity, but
it bounces back at her,

she hides,
the ball in a earthen bowl
under the covers of a cotton towel
tucked safely away from
the voices
of the humming fridge.

the dough rises full
she kneads it twice as much as before
stiff forearms punch the gluten down
palms grind it into the counter,
flipping the ball over for more
it endures as it's split,
quartered for pans,

they rest,
for the last time.

the oven warms
sweet transformation through the stagnant air,
comfort rises with the loaves
golden brown, calm
collected, whole

she shares
serving smiles with butter and honey.