

## **Difaqane**

We have a mulberry tree in our garden (it is not ours).  
It grows on the other side of a white wall. Yawning

its branches over the electric fence that separates us  
from our neighbours, it sheds its black fruit onto the grass.

The morning I came out to my mother,  
all my lovers came out instead.

I saw my mother's horror rise as she watched them  
claw themselves from my mouth, hands gripping

at my cheeks and jaw to squeeze themselves  
into the air -- one by one standing at my side

with gemmed eyes,  
and bound breasts and lips like plums.

I saw my mother's horror rise, her eyes like salt-clouds  
scanning the row, searching for Jehovah fruitlessly.

That same morning, I stepped into the garden with bare feet  
plucked the berries from the ground, crawled

and ate the sun-warmed fruit  
until my lips became black smudges.

Finally falling still,  
sensing violence in the scattering.