

Grandma Smelled of Cinnamon

Rebecca Clifford

Her skin imbued with the scent of Christmas,
she would ice cookies the way old world masters spatula'd oils on a canvas.

She stayed with us for a month of Sundays each year, and we shared my room, my bed.

Steeped in that invisible cloud of fragrance,
she would whisper me to sleep with stories of a childhood in Ottawa or Ireland,
a million miles,
a million years away.

With her camel humps bound in an iron brassiere of modesty,
she inspired me, the newest magi,
to bring cinnamon to the kitchen crèche,
where my mother baked trays of pigs in blankets, and called them baby Jesuses.

