**Cornbread**
by Silas House

I like to scoop the meal up by hand,
no spoon, so I can feel the grain
on my fingers, wonder at the fields
which gave it life. I love the splash
of egg, the smidge of flour, the dash
of sugar. When I mix all of this
I see my mother cooking for me
after a long day bent over stoves,
spent slaving for all the awful
children at the elementary
school. I see my aunt, cigarette
planted firmly between teeth
as she holds the bowl against
her belly, her eyes on “The Young
and the Restless” while the skillet
of grease heats in the roaring gas
oven. I see my grandmother and
every woman before her
in my family and yes, even
the occasional man who lowered
himself to cook, who secretly
enjoyed fingering
the meal, too. This
is the curse of who we are
as a people, always eating
our own history, tasting the past.