**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.