

1999

Wednesday

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Wednesday

Underneath the jackets and sweaters,
at the open collars of shirts,
nestled in the push
of breasts, there are crosses,
suddenly. There are more people
bowing their heads over meals, serving
up portions of fish with reverence,
like a child to a god. For days
this will continue,
and when the heavy spring rains
break the nubs of flowers
from their stalks, flow
earth together like a river, the crosses
will disappear into drawers
and cedar boxes on the top shelf
of closets.

But you, brother,
will wear that smooth pewter
to the Persian Gulf, tangled
with your dog tags. The swathed
desert bodies you bear to the ground
with a whip of your gun
will remind you of the people countries
and gods away, stumbling
from stunned church doors,
their foreheads blurred with ash.

—Mary Ann T. Davis '00