

I'm not familiar with your cooking.

he said he was a cartographer.
he said he was respectful.
he said he knew my father well,
and my uncle, too.

“that’s strange,” I said,
they aren’t familiar with your
made-lines,
your smooth skin & sharp pen,
your mother’s mother, Fran;
they’ve never mentioned her,
neither.

he said he was my first babysitter.
he said my favorite food was peas.
he said my favorite color was orange.

“that’s strange,” I said,
i’m not familiar with your
cooking.
i’m not familiar with your eye
color,
or your ink-stained hands,
the graphite on your palm,
the sweat on the bridge of your
nose;
it smells.

he said he knew how to dance.
he said he would dance with me, like
this;
like when we were kids
at the lake
when mom wasn’t watching
and he could splash water in my
eyes
and we would kiss.

he said he was a cartographer.
he said he would take me to the lake.
he said he would marry me right
then and
he said my skin was smooth.
he said my hair was soft and
then it was down and

then it was long and
in two years he’d cut it short for
a project for his grandmother.

he said he was a cartographer.
he said his eyes were hazel, but
they
were really just brown.
and he was really just a
fisherman – who wrote
poetry and played lots of
characters.

he said he was a babysitter,
and a brother,
and a father,
and an uncle,
and a dancer.
but I never really cared to dance
or to fish
or to map – whatever that
meant,
really.

but he said he wanted my hair,
so I let him cut it.