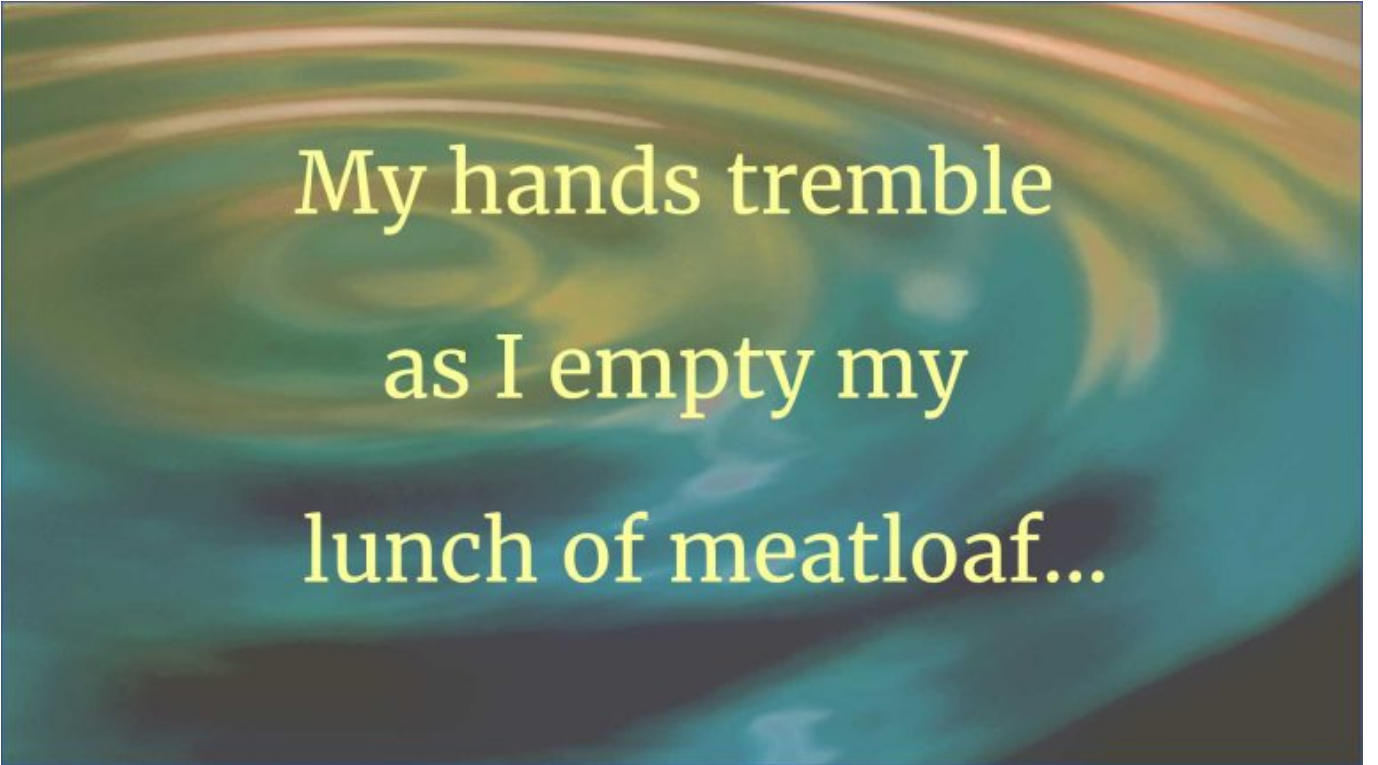


A Dance of Love

Category: Poems

written by Elena Schwolsky | June 6, 2025



My hands tremble
as I empty my
lunch of meatloaf...

Like a rose
The nurse says
Of this new, unexpected opening into my body,
Fastening the pouch with expert hands
Deep red
Inside out

My hands tremble as I empty my
lunch of meatloaf and mashed potatoes
Rendered brown murky liquid
Into the toilet.

Later, in the darkness
I awaken, out of place and time
Covered in the waste of my own body.

My husband answers my call
Blinks himself awake
Calmly circles my naked body
Splayed across the bed
Offered up
Like the pale underbelly of a fish.

He is careful, tender
Approaching, retreating,
Patting and patting again.

Until the flesh is clean
Until the rose is safely covered
Until my spirit is quiet.

My gaze turns away, drifting upward
Lands on the plaster ceiling,
Looking down at this man
By my side for so many years,
Unafraid
Of this new me,
Fastens the pouch,
Pulls a clean gown over my shoulders,
Straightens the covers,
Kisses my forehead
And keeps watch as I drift back to sleep.