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Still Life with Lemons

4:50 a.m.

I discover lemons
drying in a blue bowl.

I cannot bring myself to call you
or go back to bed.

4:51 a.m.

If I talked to you
could you answer
without crying?

I have no pity.

I am yellow and dry as a lemon left
too long in the sun.

These lemons, these globes,
are pitted
as an old woman's chin,
but bright as new dahlias, sweet,
sour.

At this hour, I have nothing but small
hard thoughts.

4:57 a.m.

I live in a place half west,
half south, where lemons grow,
where people pick their own friends,

and are not plucked, sliced open,
squeezed.

I am the lemon that refuses entry.

I am the lemon that does not need to know
the parts of a lemon.

5:00 a.m.

The mind can imagine anything
but forgiveness.

5:07 a.m.

I choose one lemon to hold.

It is cool, still green
where it held on to the tree.

Linda Malnack

Linda Malnack has published poems in *America*, the *Amherst Review*, the *Seattle Review*, and *Southern Humanities Review*. Currently, she volunteers as a co-editor for *Switched-on Gutenberg*. Linda lives and writes in Seattle.