

Tim Suermondt

### MISSING SUPPER

Don't grieve too long  
over the ones who will never  
be with us for another meal.  
Rest assured that wherever they are

they are cooking a simple  
and nourishing meal and parading  
now and then in wide aprons  
embossed with the words

### IF THE POT BOILS, FRIENDSHIP LIVES.

They've saved us a place at their table  
and are relishing the chance  
when they can escort us into the kitchen

and fill us in on all the mysteries, answers  
flowing from their lips sweetly as fine wine.  
Blow out the candles and turn on the stove—  
how beautiful we were, how beautiful we are.

### RUBIES OF BABYLON

I lie back a little dreamlike,  
let Mary Immaculate take the blood she needs.  
The sun has found its way inside,  
enveloping all of us in its light—  
I swear I see my mother putting my brothers to bed.  
“There aren't any monsters. Be brave like Hoppy.”  
Before I can say a word to her, she's gone.  
“You've got good blood,” the nurse says.  
I answer with an expression mother always used  
whenever she encountered something exemplary:  
“Beautiful as the Rubies of Babylon.”  
“Yeah,” the nurse says, quickly pulling the needle  
out of my arm, “sometimes beauty is enough to make  
me cry, if I didn't have to cry.”