

Last year they tore down
the last town trailer park.
A stream gutters under my house.

A stream follows the path of a fault line.
Our gravestones are signposts to everywhere:
Yun, Kobayashi, Menendez, Revere.

The Sunset Mausoleum *Welcomes all Visitors.*
The backhoe inters the *arriviste* dead.
What's the name of the stream in Huichin Ohlone?

Oyster clouds open. The question lingers.
Our coastlines are swallowed
are hollowed like vowels—

MEJDULENE B. SHOMALI

vernacular as ethnographic refusal

—after Marwa Helal

my siblings & i make a game of it
translating arabic to english
intimating the uncanny

we are literal above metaphor
who would pee on a dying man's hand?
why would the pee save him?

arabs in america we have no context
four daughters, pray to the virgin mary
every two hours another spoonful

meat chicken eggs & still no good at school
imagine bringing maqlooba to a fifth grade potluck
like leaning against a slanted wall

we die into each other, this secret language
this great grandfather's legacy, this house of poets
we are a shit sword falling to the ground

we are circling on the loose strands of our hair
we are breathing in scents
we are leaving & never returning

may god arrive you there in peace
may you find what you left as you left it
may god leave you for one another