

Shaun T. Griffin

**La Heilera**

Limbed by our losses  
we stumble on to the next  
border of safe and certain  
choices, all burden of being  
stowed neatly in the ice  
below. What the mind begins,  
the body cannot know.  
And in the blue forest  
of regret, some portent  
of another will emerge—  
no story but the self it seems,  
bound to the rope of isolation.

If we touch the fine  
cloth of reason, if we dive  
down low to listen, some  
rubble of definition begins—  
how little we are without others—  
even as we're told to live  
without them, this strain  
of solitude and worry.  
And rely on lesser things—  
a last piece of color  
in the Rose of Sharon  
before winter craters in.

heilera is slang for icebox—the room where immigrants held

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**When, for One Morning, Touch**

Days that I slip from the warm earth  
of your hands and drive thirty miles  
into the eastern sky of sage and dust,  
for those who monthly meet

to pick up the broken skin of us,  
nurses, cops, mothers, and farmers—  
I come again to you, old friends, pressed  
to the rudimentary palms of flesh, of one

person without the dawn, to redress desire:  
as if touch were an element from which  
the atom of attraction sprung,  
not physical, but the organic compound

of freedom, a periodic table of inclusion  
when our voices collide with the ancestral voice  
that will not go unheeded, and  
this motionless morning finally relents.