

Taherah Saffazadeh's "Birthplace"

I have never seen the place where I was born
the place my mother
laid down beneath a ceiling
her womb's cumbrous load
The first tick-tockings of my small heart
still alive in the chimney fittings
and in the crannies of the old bricks
and there still visible on the door and walls
is that look of shame,
my mother's look at my father
and my grandfather
A choked voice murmured
"It's a girl"
The midwife trembled
unsure of her birthing fee
and goodbye to the circumcision feast
The first visit I make to my birthplace
I'll peel from the wall
that ashamed look of my mother
and there where the bold rhythm of my pulse began
I'll make confession:
my clear hands bear no urge to clench and strike
Brawling drunk isn't my language
I take no pride in killing
Male supremacy
never fattened me at its table