

Leaving Egypt

The men are out, as usual,
standing in whitewashed doorways

talking about Pharaoh, the plagues,
Moses. I feel the energy rise

like a heat wave—the decision to leave
growing, shimmering above the floor

of this small street. I smell cooking—
Ahuva making her safflower and cinnamon

spiced lamb. She made that for me after the birth
of my son. That night I sat in the cool

of the doorway, bleeding a little, breathing,
eating small bites. I've lived next to her

all my life. I lean against the rough
doorframe. It's still there, a smear of blood.

The mark that means, finally, we're leaving
this home. This terrible city, this place

we have always known. Keep breathing
the midwife said. Start walking

my husband will say.

Wall, Emily, "Leaving Egypt" *Common Ground Review* 18, 1 (2016): 72.