

**Clarissa**

Clarissa has since learned  
that her grandmother cut her tomatoes wrong.  
She'd never lay  
the fruity vegetables on the table and slice them  
so each piece would fall  
like dominoes atop each other.

Many a time Clarissa watched  
her grandmother's aged left hand hold a tomato  
like a soft ball pitcher  
while her just as aged right hand slid a knife  
toward her body –  
each tomato slice laying motionless atop each other  
as if still whole but  
waiting to be spread around the edge of a pretty plate.

Clarissa never worried  
about blood mixing into the tomato juice—  
blood was never an issue.  
Her grandmother cut her tomatoes with a precision  
Clarissa, back then, admired.  
Watching her grandmother, Clarissa learned to aim a knife  
toward her belly  
and emerge with an inviting presentation.