

LUBNA SAFI

## Portrait of a Mummy in Granada

She leans across the table in a small café in Granada,  
her hair falling limp against round shoulders, an angular  
curve outlines the rest of her arms,  
her hands crossed over one another on her lap,  
to tell me I remind her of a mummy.

In an image of an image I am refigured  
to a relative twice-dead removed,  
a mummy almost too small to be a woman,  
too tight and wrapped in herself.

I did not ask her to clarify the portrait  
of the painted woman of *fayyum*,  
or what she meant when she said  
“You have her nose from this angle.”

She might have meant it the way my grandmother means  
when she tells me to face a mirror  
and discard those reflections  
that don't suit me. The difficulty  
of fixing myself  
in frames like an object  
suspended and gilded, pulling a face from its features.

My hand reached out of habit for the fruit  
across her at a table as ancient as the city.  
The difference a layer makes  
when it wraps and covers and resembles.  
The way it must have looked when I unraveled the fabric  
framed around my face,  
like seeing a grape for the first time without its skin,  
an eye held between two fingers,  
unadorned in my mouth as I chewed.