

BORDERS

I know its shape—
 my not-country
 faraway home.
 I know the space
 it takes
 the snail head
 of Tabriz
 at the top,
 bulbous
 spiral of the rest.
 I've known
 for decades
 without knowing,
 the way I didn't know
 what countries touch
 the tender neck,
 the belly or the shell
 except Iraq
 because my cousins
 hoped not to die
 on that front.

—Farnaz Fatemi
 From *Sister Tongue*
 The Kent State University Press, 2022

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