Two Phone Calls

Bad news arrives over black cables from Boston. From Vancouver.
Two old friends, both fifty, both dead. Cancer, cardiac collapse.

I peel potatoes, carrots, onions as if the scraping damp chore will sponge my sadness. My tears outrun the onions’ tears.

Outside, the pin oak is leafing out. The air mists with sap and spring and shades of arbors and emeralds animated with lemonlight. The earth pungent with wet woods.

The stew slow boils . . .

Soft cuttings of meat lose their redness. Juices drain to brown.

Simmerings, textures float sinewy as threaded veins. Vegetables distinguish themselves—organic pigmentations like leaves in autumn

when one season lies down for another.

Gail Ghai