

JEAN-MARK SENS  
**PEARL ONIONS**

A little jewel in a silvery Japanese paper lantern  
you peel to brightness with the tip of a paring knife,  
your thumb and index pushing out the small bulb to a wet nakedness.  
Acrid on your hand, pungent in the hot kitchen  
you gather them in a white ceramic bowl.  
They glow, translucent, rich ivory,  
hardly make you cry.  
They will soften when braising  
loosen up rind after rind  
sweetening to gain color from inside,  
mantle over mantle of flesh  
a Russian doll vegetable.  
The core inside the kernel  
a self-walled emptiness  
thin veil of a last dishabille  
where Spring would shoot a thin green sprout.  
You break the news.  
Soon you will move.  
You trim the last pearl onion diligently  
and let it roll on the top of the heap.