

## **estimated values**

i don't know how old my grandparents are,  
or the exact day my parents were born on;  
they didn't keep track of that thing in yemen

my cousin and i would ask, and we usually got  
a response similar to "well, your mom was born  
before so and so, but after that one battle..."

*jadda* never learned how to write,  
and she can barely read if it isn't Quran verses  
so she bakes and cooks using years of instincts

the kids are growing up, their tongues stumbling  
on the arabi words as they struggle to talk to *jaddoo*  
trying to translate 'bee' by making a buzzing sound

nothing is in writing, not a birthdate and not a  
single recipe; so where do we exist beyond the  
memories of the people who will die and take

our history with them to the earth? what will be left  
when the stories are lost in the language we never  
fully grasped and let slip away?