

Chickenboxwitsaltpepperhotsauce, a word

followed by a *please*
and *ketchup on the fries*

And I get my family back in the moment
I wade through Lexington Market
looking at everything
but only buying from Park's
an old faithful, a tradition
I hope to keep if I have children
but it is only a moment

I've moved out
Mom has moved on
Dad is alone
Grandmother doesn't need Faidley's fish anymore
because she's no longer on the way home
& the Market is being rebuilt and gentrified

but I get to bite into crisp skin,
tear things apart with bare hands,
and moan.

Indulge in the salty sticky-sweet,
devour something, and mean it.

but I am from this

when i am not in baltimore, i miss it
i cannot say half and half in any other part
of the country and still get what i want—
something crisp and sticky and sweet and refreshing—
or a chicken box doctored up good
or real steamed blue crabs
or old bay

but i never said i was from baltimore
until recently—i was always from just nearby
just over the city lines;
the violence that lingers with the name
consumes too much energy,
allows people who have only seen the wire
to judge me based on what they think
some not-so-spot-on tv show shows.