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JEANETTE LYNES

My Mother's Feet

You think I press 'end', fit my smart phone back in its red casket and forget you miles away in that white bed with the bend in it.

Forget your feet. I don't. The thing eating at them never leaves my mind. How could your feet fall from remembrance?

The knobs of hardened flesh, knolled there, the battered heels, the corns. Terrible feet. The soles of farmers' wives don't make for animated chat

at the best of times – still, I'd tell anyone with ready ears of the two-dollar sneakers you wore (the only kind, pliable

thing in your life) – I wish I had a pair of your old running shoes now. Your old running. The only ears are here.

You think I don't recall your trudges through fouled straw, leaden pails pulling down your arms. You tallied you made the moon and back,

feeding feathered livestock. I once showed you my geography book – women in hot countries, wearing bright patterns, bearing yokes over bad terrain –

I said 'you are like this' – you blushed. Do you remember your boled toes (purpled now, with sores) worming into warm, fresh-turned garden soil?

Or dipping, next to mine, into cool creek frowzy with wild mint? Your feet could laugh, could cry. There should be a Nobel Prize for feet – though *any* prize

would pinken your face. You suppose I write my slender books and live my big doctorized life and forget you. I remember. I press 'end', it only begins.

Jeanette Lynes's poetry appears earlier in this volume.