Gourd

DONNA DENIZÉ

In a sideboard shuttered away,
I find it. Shake it.
let it fill my palm—
this brown surface
smooth and firm.
Who held it,
carried it to this shore?
I shake it.
Beads rattle, as I stand
hoping to hear voices—*Ayiti*—
voices lilting
from a land I long to know
know how I am moored to them.
And who placed this gourd
in the chest of a drafty dining room
on Cape Cod beneath old books,
recipes for this home,
a bed and breakfast
listed once
in *The Green Book*?
O Gourd—
abandoned, buried
in mahogany wood— chest
of darker shade, I wait
—trusting I can live somewhere
in between yearning,
to settle, at last,
in one skin—here
Ayiti—Ayiti—Ayiti . . .
people from Senegal, Guinea,
Sierra Leone, Angola, songs,
once distant, now one.
I shake it,
search for what has
been inside and now is summoned
summoned in sound.

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