

have mercy

the episcopal bishop of washington dc asked the president to have mercy on immigrants, the undocumented. "people who pick our crops & clean our office buildings, who labor in poultry farms and meatpacking plants, who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants, and work the night shifts in hospitals..." i wonder who that "we" is, that "we" are the only ones who eat, but that would be pretending. my grandmother worked in a factory that made and packaged lightswitch covers, my grandfather with the union at PSE&G, an electrician who had to get his degree again but in english this time. but i do not remember them for their labor. my grandfather would weave soccer nets out of fishing rope and start up games on his breaks. my grandmother would explain why jesus was on the crucifix over her bed every time i asked, powdering and

lotioning my small body after washing me gently with baby soap, only ever baby soap. my grandfather died from a pipe falling on his head at work, my grandmother of brain cancer, and if this bishop asked me how they, as immigrants, served “us,” i would tell her, first, to shove it, second, to pay for the upkeep of their graves since their labor for “us” is what took them both from me, and third, i would tell her they brought light to everything, and it wouldn’t be a lie.