

Two Phone Calls

Bad news arrives over black cables
from Boston. From Vancouver.
Two old friends, both fifty,
both dead. Cancer,
cardiac collapse.

I peel potatoes, carrots, onions
as if the scraping damp chore
will sponge my sadness.
My tears outrun the onions' tears.

Outside, the pin oak is leafing out.
The air mists with sap
and spring and shades
of arbors and emeralds
animated with lemonlight.
The earth pungent with wet woods.

The stew slow boils . . .

Soft cuttings of meat
lose their redness.
Juices drain to brown.

Simmerings, textures float
sinewy as threaded veins.
Vegetables distinguish themselves—
organic pigmentations
like leaves in autumn

when one season lies down
for another.

Gail Ghai