

Kohlrabi

by Kate Dike

when I was small we grew kohlrabi
cabbage cousin, German turnip
thick-skinned bulbs robed in green and violet
with ruffled leaves on top like crowns
royal names—white Vienna, purple Danube,
grand duke, azure star

with my sister in the garden
squatting among the rows in dusty flip-flops
shirts waving from the clothesline
we grasped the spoke-like leaves and
pulled a few stout orbs from the earth
washed them off with the backyard hose
and took them inside to pare

sitting at the kitchen table, formica and chrome, legs dangling
on the radio Doris Day sang “que sera, sera”
while mom placed a handful of daisies in an aqua vase
we shook a few grains of salt on the creamy vegetable flesh
and took our first bites of crisp pepperiness

ah sweet crunch, take me back
peel away the years
reveal the innocent core
we savor