

San Pedro River Review

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What This Country Kneads

With practiced hands, which represent
 what faith I can muster, I knead the dough,
heel of my palm coaxing, fingers cupping,
 stretching, folding, rolling, every

gesture an act of vulnerability, a study
 in grace, a prayer for outcome—wholesome
loaves to share at my table, a fine-grained crust,
 yielding inner crumb.

Oh America. I have accepted your pasty pale excuse
 of a loaf for way too long in the name of peace
and prosperity. Fool no longer, I bake black,
 red, yellow. I bake fat and skinny. I bake

Jewish rye and Turkish flatbread, melon pan,
 Conchas and Serbian soda. I bake like
company's coming and bringing persnickety
 Aunt Freda. I bake like Paul Hollywood is judging
and Jesus is preparing his sermon.

I bake like there's no tomorrow or a tomorrow
 after that, because I swear on a stack of
King James holy-rollies, you, America,
 have got your motor running, but are firing on all the wrong
cylinders and Aunt Freda carries a loaded handgun
 concealed in her privileged white pocket.