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That Pause

like a delayed signal--
you can almost feel
the switches ganging on,
or something momentarily
caught, a clog,
in a drain,
before, at last, the train of memory
comes chugging through,
flags flying,
bringing *magnanimous*
to the station, like a candidate
on a whistle-stop tour,

or
it's as if you'd submitted
a request for a rare cartographer's tome
in an elegant library reading room,
and waited patiently, under
the chandeliers, by the brass
lamps, until a tiptoeing
librarian wearing
white gloves put it into
your hands-*Castellammare del Golfo!*
and its syllables canter, tossing
their manes, down a cobblestone street
to a brilliantly flashing sea.

Dark with Excess of Bright

The late sun's a molten
coin in a furnace, dissolving
again and again,
as I walk west after seeing
my brain-blasted father.

Now nimbuses flash
on the dimensionless
dark of the hall closet,
as I open the door
to hang up my coat. Both seem
without heft.

Oh, give him the coins
for his final journey, undaze
him. Or let him blink back
the Cave.

Feeding My Father

You stick out the tip
of your pink tongue,
which trembles a little, and suck in
battered codfish from the fork
I've raised-working
your ancient false teeth,
steadily, seriously.

In the room there's a humid smell
of softening flesh, an acrid overlay
of urine leaking into "pull-ups."

I flick a crumb from your chin
with a corner of your napkin-bib,
and my moving hand
remembers, across
the tumble of years,
trying to keep pace with
my first baby's satisfying smack rapid
ingestion of his Gerber apricots,
wiping up chunky spit-up
from *putti* lips...

But why did nothing
smell bad?

Your gaze moves away
without a forwarding address
until the window's shine against
the dark provides
an age-mate whose grey eyes
accept yours. You both smile.

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Judy Kronenfeld's second full-length collection of poems, *Light Lowering in Diminished Sevenths*, won *The Litchfield Review* Poetry Book Prize for 2007 and was published in spring, 2008, by *The Litchfield Review* Press. Her most recent chapbook is *Ghost Nurseries* (Finishing Line Press, 2005). Her poems have appeared in many journals including *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *The Portland Review*, *Poetry International*, *The Louisville Review*, *Spillway*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *The Pedestal*, *Barnwood*, and *The Women's Review of Books*, as well as in anthologies including *Blue Arc West: An Anthology of California Poets* (Tebot Bach, 2006), and *Red, White and Blues: Poets on the Promise of America* (Iowa U. P., 2004). She has also published stories and personal essays in *The Madison Review*, *The North American Review*, *Potpourri*, *The Crescent Review* and *Under the Sun*. She teaches in the Creative Writing Department at the University of California, Riverside.