

# THE REBIRTH OF VENUS

poem by Luisa Giulianetti



Image: “The Kitchen Goddess” by JoAnne Tucker. “The Rebirth of Venus” was written by Luisa Giulianetti for *Rattle*’s Ekphrastic Challenge, February 2023, and selected as the Artist’s Choice.

I blew that half shell. Took to the waiting shore  
found new digs and never looked back. Feet  
happily calloused and belly full. In this kitchen

I reign supreme. Stir my own pot. Garland  
my tresses with wild rosebuds. My monarch  
gown wings marigold as I glissade

across the maple floor to the awaiting catch.  
I hold a fanned scallop between my thumb  
and forefinger, slide the knife and twist. Prize

open the hinge. Free plump flesh from its frilly  
skirt. Rinse, dry, salt. Sear the lot in cast iron.  
Tang their sweetness with fresh orange. Pair

with earthy fennel. Create counterbalance.  
Like dancing. Like mercy. Arms boughed in offering  
for this body that spins me. Holds me. I linger

in betweenness: falling and stillness. The firm  
and laze of muscle. My tongue curls sturdy seeds,  
cradles supple bites. The ancient skillet seasons

flavors anew. I feast memory—ocean, sand, brine.  
Instead of praying, I sauté. Leap.  
The world, glorious and hungry, beneath my feet.