how to lose the appetite for knives

Margaret Owen Ruckert

sour colours the age
a vat of green grapes
cursing each other
one bitter coffee
damning the barista
the natural atrophy
of those eating in
who scrape pots
of nursery rhymes
nine days old

or those eating out
persons with appetites
for poison's jab
making a meal
out of jealousy and fear
scones with gossip
lips insensitive
to the delicate whites
of regional teashops
their fine-leaf curtains

the history of vinegar
begins at home
relationships can curdle
from the cradle
but food brings rewards

a warmth—lovers huddle
at the smallest of tables
spill their grievances
over afternoon tea
flower-handle knives



Margaret (Margo) Owen Ruckert is a prize-winning poet, with a wide variety of poetry published in Australia, as well as America, England, and New Zealand. She is the winner of the 2023 National Writing Competition for Poetry, hosted by the Society of Women Writers, NSW. Two books *You Deserve Dessert* and *musefood* explore café culture. Five books of tanka explore landscape through ekphrasis. A former Science lecturer, hers is a wide canvas-from chromosomes to cakes and cucumbers. As Facilitator of a community writing group in Sydney, Australia, she presents monthly writing workshops.