it is for soup
it shines
your face is upside down in it
and the right way up on the back
it rings against the cup
it is cold for the first second
then warm, and stays warm a while after the tea
the handle is thin where a thumb goes
there is a scratch across the bowl from something nobody remembers
it has a twin in the drawer, a little newer
in the dark of the drawer it faces the same way as the others
the maker's stamp on the back, read by no one
it weighs about what a letter weighs
held up, it hides one eye
under the tap it throws the water in a fan and soaks your shirt
it tastes of nothing, unless it is old, and then faintly of coin
left standing in honey it leans, and takes all evening to fall
a child licks it and puts it back, and no one knows
it holds one mouthful, which was a measure before there were measures
it is the first tool anyone is handed
and the last
it will outlast the table
it is a small bowl on a stick. someone thought of that once, for the first time.