

DAVID THACKER

Neighbors

—for E & S, December 2020

They give eggplant pie.
We give blueberry chocolate cake.

They give a job watching their cats to our eldest.
We give dried fruits baked into sourdough.

Who suggested we share a topsoil order?
We swap groans for measly peppers.

When everything in our house is trip wires,
they give a week at the family cabin.

We rock the baby while they get finally out
for an hour. Their three small children. Our two

past halfway. We give toys our girls have outgrown.
A woman and a woman, a man and a woman,

they give *Hood Feminism*, we recommend *Olio*.
When family visits, they are the neighbors

we shield and shroud. We baffle ourselves
thinking how to introduce them

without the recoil of *but*. When family visits,
are we the neighbors they shield

from *how many wives* and *magic underwear*?
They've never said, as we've never said.

And no family can visit now.
We say, *How are you holding up?*

They say, *Is your family okay?*
They bring us coquito for New Year's Eve,

and the vanilla and coconut say,
You are sacred—have some of our joy.