

Starfish

One day I donned the star necklace
my father left me to feel him still.
Did I know what the Mogen David meant?
an old friend spat. I had to google it:
Yiddish for “shield of David,” the shepherd
who felled giant Goliath with a slingshot, crowned king of Israel.

But the nazis perverted that symbol of divine favor
into a yellow badge of shame
my friend escaped, but his people
perished in Auschwitz. Then Israel betrayed
its past, herding Palestinians into camps—
Setting the star aside, I missed the caress of dad’s bling

A private david against countless Goliaths. Hugging
my mixed children, Remember! when they come for us, they will come
for you, I gifted each one a Mogen David, which they
don’t wear. And years ago, in my happy seaside place,
I bought a golden starfish necklace, its five arms flung wide
in joyous abandon I never take off.