

2011 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Second Prize: Somya Sharma

Waking Up in Cherry Hill

With the morning rays,
he stretched out
and touched his toes
wiggling them, one at a time,
and then all at once.
He brought them to life.
He gazed from his window
at the wild cherry fields
of succulent goodness,
imagining their taste in a pie,
and listened to the faint voices
of children breathing amidst
the amber-rimmed leaves
which would never leave them.
It was almost as if they were
exploring the first day in their bodies.
Patter-hearted; eyes dilated,
he moved toward the window,
absorbed by the glass,
liberated from his sloth-like
pace, ready to see the World
again, which he had so genuinely loved
so long ago.
Gliding over the razor-sharp sea
of grass, he was carried by the wind
toward the horizon
that had always been there for him,
for which he had cared none.
Cherries are nice, he thought.

Sorry

My knuckles are now white.
With each blink, I watch the dry skin
fall down below,
carried by the wind, and left
at the bottom, alone.
My eyes are like hollow rocks,
feeling nothing inside,
unable to move,
they will not see the crimson
bird flying in front of them;
their destination is set.

In dizzying unrest,
I look up as I see
the silver clouds above me
resting above my head,
knowing nothing of weight,
for whom I am a pebble.
So small, so heavy, so worried,
so insignificant.

You can be yourself here, they said.
We are your family.

We can never be too cautious.
My heart grips and squeals like
the voices of seven dying birds,
their nests atop the blue flames
of Hades' underworld throat-wringer.

My love, like vibrant indigo rose-petals
spread on the floor of an Indonesian beach
wedding, brings colour and warmth into those
of my lover, whose eyes I know too well.
The sun never shone
quite as bright as yesterday.
Sorry.

My Body for the World

Give my eyelashes to the shivering mice,
who can use them as pillows to rest their heads.

Give my hair to the little girl,
without a doll, without a childhood.

Give my nails to the grieving insects,
that will use them as basins for water.

Give my ears, to the restless sculptor,
dying to perfect his work, depleted of inspiration.

Give my feet to the aye-aye, tell him,
"This is your soul mate."

Give my knees to the jubilant musician,
who will treat them like a new kind of instrument.

Give my arms to the retired orangutan, remind her,
not all vines fall.

Give my neck to the roots of the fallen sycamore tree,
without whom the wind would be lonesome.

Send my heart out to the horizon, and let it find its place on the waters:

A flame to envelop whatever is left of me
and deliver it into the wood and into the air
and into the honey-coated bear claws,
to spread what I had borrowed not a century ago,
and return it to where it belongs,
back with the soiled ground.

Drum Sticks

On a brisk autumn night, there is
no one to hear you and
no sound to disturb you-
only your rusty oven
overdue for a cleaning and check up.
You inhale crisp air that
you have just realized is not so crisp,
but rather pungent.
It hits you like drum sticks
on a drum set
during a drum show.