

Burnt

Last winter I could see
through my skin

to my veins

I was pale as a mermaid,
as milk, the moon

I shone like a snowflake.

~

I'm lying under the apricot tree on the hill.
All summer I have been eating apricots.
Cicada skins cover the brown trunk.

My own burnt skin is a slowly retreating tide,
peeling from my chest in filmy waves.

My legs are freckled and
brown as egg-shells.

I'm lying on my front, my nose and mouth
squashed against my arm where the skin is soft,
 like apricots
smelling of apricots
with the speckled
sunset flush of wild fruit.

I bet I even taste of apricots.

I never thought I would be
anything other than pale –

All I need now is a petal shaped stone
to encase my heart and I will be complete.

Guilt

Remember the thwack
of sparrow on glass
and how only the
snapped wing
didn't tremble
or
twitch?

Love, I'm sorry,
but I never
broke its neck
like I promised;
when it convulsed
in the cup of my hands,
I dropped it.

Now, there are birds everywhere –

a flock inside the drier chatters shrilly

around the magnolia,
are the scattered
dead-waxeye shapes
of downy flower cases

I buy a stamp for a letter –
on my coin the kiwi
opens its eye

real birds, too,
flicker at the peripheries

My head is bursting with birds –
I can't see for all the feathers and fluttering

At least, though, they fill up this empty space
And their cries eclipse the why
whywhy.

Was it distance, or just
the possibility of a clear sky
that first fired the urge
to fly?

Louise Glück

Reading your poems
eating an apple
on the old brown couch

pips drop
onto my shirt
when I bite close
to the core

each a surprise –
a coffee coloured tear.

Your poems also,
with their green
skin and white
flesh to bite crisply,
they
drop
pips.

Some I find
stuck to my skin.

Others fall
between
the cushions
to germinate
in the dark

and be found
much later

when a curl
of green
leaf creeps
into the
open –

falling across it;

a line of light

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