

Fertility

Carol Clark Ottesen

On your twelfth birthday,
the day you found a kinship with the moon and tides,
you sat on the front steps as a great burlap ball
rolled in its place secured and shimmering—
an olive tree.

And when it grew the tree became
a pestilence of black stain, olives smashed
We sprayed the blossoms, pruned the limbs
but every year the olives fell.

But you in careful blossoming and being
never knew why you dropped no fruit
or why apples lie rotting in the ditch,
the trout lays ten thousand eggs or more,
precious semen spills unused
while you, with olive oil upon your head
ask for just one.