

## Fruit

*Tyler Chadwick*

First

“She’s like an apple  
in a water balloon,”  
the doctor says. They watch

their fruit unfold across  
the screen in light movements.  
Submerged beneath her sea

enclosed by silent walls,  
slow fluid breaths inspire  
her ripening, baptize

the room in innocence.  
Within this matrix  
of tranquility,

they sense her beckoning  
through sound’s translucent waves,  
calling from her still place

into time’s raging sea  
for a Return. Then Light  
ripples from ’round her world

as from the Garden tree  
whence God called to Adam  
and questioned why His Seed  
had grown so ripe with blood.

Last

Within their yellow tree  
atop a falling hill,  
still shades of spring shadow

the waiting fruit. Chilled rains  
stagnate in micro-seas  
about their stems, throw drops

of ripened dew across  
his face as he climbs  
upward, pulls the apples

from their place, and drops them  
to her waiting hands below.  
Pale bruises hide beneath

the golden skin, some from  
their gathering, some from  
tussles with rough branches

and hungry birds, and some  
born from the inside-out  
of parasitic guile.

Holding his breath, he cradles  
the last fruit and feels  
naked branches stealing  
the blood from his cold hand.

Return

The pair, fallen with years,  
returns to their garden,  
straining for shades of green

within the withered gold.  
They step, each arm in arm,  
beneath their waiting tree

and rest against the trunk.  
His eyes pursue the land  
into a blurry field

and hers cover his face  
in reminiscent strokes.  
She sees the sun depart

his gaze. Dark winds carry  
the breath of swollen fruit,  
pooled round their feet. He sighs;

she leans against his arm  
and waits with him the night  
that folds across his frame.

Her tears swell with their fruit,  
distilling through Earth's skin  
into the flowing blood  
of their generations' veins.