

The Generosity of Pears

The small gravel of the brown Bosc
gritty between the teeth,

and a yellow Bartlett ripened too long
in a blue bowl,

its velvet flesh gone milky and wet
like custard before bed, juice

drawing flies,

plus one decorous Anjou
minding its pale green manners

in a cool metal lunch box—

Remember how we knelt in the orchard
between arched rows?

How we pointed our wooden ladders
into the rooms of the sky?

How we crated up beauty
side by side in its own perfume?

— as the rimmed sun touches noon
and three grown men in worn jeans

gone white at knee and crotch
straddle the stacked lumber,

unbuckle their heavy leather
carpenter's belts

and reach into the truck
for the packed lunch.

Remember the wet tip of the tongue
flicking the bow of the top lip?

The full curve of the lower lip
that slips over slick flesh?

The sweet swelling and melt
in the spaces between our bones?

You, I have loved completely,
your beauty like three pears

smooth in the hasp of calloused palms,
each man unshaven and fragrant

as the white blossoms of April,
each bud concealing its jewel.

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