

## Apple Hell

This is a yellow I'd go to hell for,  
murder for, lie for, and even marry.  
Exhume my family and dissect them.  
Autumn demands its own geography,  
dialects and inventions.

It must be a Thursday in London.  
Paris is possible. Or Prague. Rain and history  
gouged out the size of a canvas  
or a door into air persistent and amber.  
It's genetically engineered.

I learn the gestures and rituals of autumn.  
The asanas. And some deceptively haphazard  
quality implying wind. It's intrinsic, the way a chiffon  
scarf tossed across the sunburned shoulders  
of a beautiful woman is.

Apple dawn. Apple noon. Transitions of necessity  
break like paper bridges. One dice toss and the farm  
is lost. The country of my birth shred itself to confetti.

Give me absolution in increments of yellow.  
Lampshades, opera shawls, tea-stained lace tablecloths.  
A mantilla, perhaps, pearls, and a Mardi Gras mask.

The woman smoking by the fountain  
is considering paradox. It's ironic and amusing,  
rehearsing suicide while shopping for antiques  
and buying calla lilies.

The serial killer dreams of mother carrying  
a wicker basket of sea-blue towels  
and just picked apples, skin translucent as infants.  
It's an image to remember with a knife.  
He'll tattoo this to a six-year-old. Babette. Danielle.

This is why lamps were invented, prayers, calendars,  
the M-18. This is why we fear the plaza, the embrace  
mouth to ochre mouth. I call you dog and you bark.  
All love is a form of contagion.  
Concubines know this, rinsing ginger  
from their hair. October afternoons elongate  
like a woman in a coma  
or eighth year of marriage.

This is not a journey, she thinks, startled.  
It's a felony.

We eat apples electric light bulb yellow.  
How they sting. It's an interior tattoo, a road  
map to where we really live. We send ourselves  
to prison camps where we paint our fingernails  
gold and watch the choreography of hawk.

There are only these wind sampled  
maple leaves, this corrosive remorse  
turning what we loved to rust.  
Mouth to ochre mouth.  
Call me dog.  
Wrap me in rags.  
Tell me I'm beautiful.  
There is cinnamon in the well.  
Villages with temples and aviaries  
float at the edge.  
It's a day to bathe in almond.  
Still yellow water.  
Pond under cathedral bells.

I could close you like a pocket mirror.  
I could wear you like a scar.