

Taylor Graham

FALL

In late September light the roses
deepen their bloom. The year
won't return this warm again.

Across the neighbor's fence,
on tiptoes and a ladder,
he stretches for the purple

teardrops, plump in their velvet
skins. She loves the taste
of figs. He doesn't. But

already stained with sticky milk,
he slips another handful
in his sack. The ladder

trembles, steadies on a bough.
A smell of dropped fruit rotting
rises to him off the ground.

A new extension, for the highest
sweetest figs. Too sweet.
The kind she loves. And yet

he wonders, is it the taste
of figs she loves, or just
to see him reach, for her.