

leaning forward, away from your clothes,
that freedom to crush your face into treasure
because that's what it's for.

The fig, toned dark like organ meat,
like the thick blood of the liver or a root,
still no rival to pear or orange or mango,
to the heavy melon ripeness of a Sunday in July.

Yet we ate figs all summer. Each day
began dark with a fierce chorus of fighting cocks,
their cries edging into days like the rosary of Charo's name,
like gifts almost off-hand, as though to fuss, shredding colored paper,
might anger that other namesake, that carrier of tidings,
with the thought that hoarded presents could take the place
of news, of observation, of eating what is close at hand.

HOSPITAL GIRL

I like flowers with many petals and watching bag-people on the lawn
collecting bottles. I like Sammy when he smiles and the light moving on
the river outside my window. I like biting my nails and the taste and
smell of olives, green ones, on my fingers long after I've eaten them for
lunch. I like the night-time and my dreams, if they are not too long. I like
the early morning before the girl in the next bed is awake and starts
gasping. I like telling my mother I feel pins in my buttocks when I move
quickly, as though they had fallen asleep. I like her meeting the word
buttocks, eyebrows high and eyes wide. I like the smell of the nurses'
greenish rubber gloves. I like the small bruise on my hand when they
remove the IV. I like watching it fade. I like the lounge because the
window opens. I like visitors from school when they bring presents and
talk softly. I like the gray haired nurse who comes in the middle of the
night. I like rubbing the sleep out of my lashes alone each morning. I like
the way my fingers move in the air. I like breakfast when there's yogurt.