

Three Poems · *Donald Schenker*

PINK

for Jack Hurth

Me with my bad back, tired, I set the kid down,
been carrying him a long way
in arms, on hips, shoulders, back, unable
to feel the joy in traveling—so heavy a bundle.

Can such a place be a destination?
Just for a minute I set him down in the dirt,
in one of the smelly furrows of this field.
I sit down myself and catch my breath.

He starts playing as if it were an ordinary place.
He throws little handfuls of it up into the air,
giggling at me to see
am I watching, do I want to play, too.
He has no idea.

Not today, kid. Just resting here a few minutes
before we go on, I tell myself.
I take his shoes off, though, his little shirt, his pants.
Naked, he prances on the bad ground.
He falls, he stands, he giggles,
claps with little clumps of it.
His little butt glows in the poor furrows.
What the hell. I get undressed myself.

If I could back off from this moment—not too far
back up the way we came, squint at this place
the way you see water in the distance
where there is none—I'd swear
there was a garden here, plenty to eat, prize
roots and greens, all with a blush to them.