

Persephone: A Letter Home

Melanie Cockrell

Mother will you see
the way the flowers hold
their thighs tight as maidens?
They wait for you to curl
your fingertip into their laps
and stain their sheets with pollen.

And just this morning the worms
whispered to me that the earth
loves you as much as I do.
But how deep down does it
ache for your cup of bouillon?
Does it love you to its belly?

Dear Demeter, I am nothing but a swallowed
stone, cooling on my husband's open palm.
My hunger for you and your elderflower
has stained my nightgown with pomegranate.
Now what grows in me is only shadow
and ice. The dead all bow to their queen.

Mother do as the gods say
for we both must in the end.
If not they will drain me of my marrow.
So wean the leaves from their backbones
children doubled over in a wet pocket.
Call on your seasons, welcome me home.

I need to collapse in your garden, lock
arms with your soil, settle my roots.
Let me nestle in your allspice
your horsetail, ginger and cinnamon.
Then grind my bones and steep them.
We will drink each other like broth.