

Amaranth · Laurie Sheck

Imagine it,  
the Amaranth is said to be undying,  
its petals like pearls  
harboring the pink light  
of sunsets.  
It is forgiveness.  
It is the peasant who refuses  
to abdicate  
his small patch of land.  
Someone sad  
must have invented it,  
perhaps as he watched  
thick flocks of sparrows  
fleeing from winter,  
and felt the hands of famine  
cradling his home.  
So he imagined its leaves  
tender as butterflies,  
and its stubborn center  
domestic as hairpins.  
In wind, it would rustle  
like pages of a book  
treasured since childhood,  
“Far off and long ago,”  
it might begin, and end,  
“Although the oldest daughter  
died as a child  
in a cold, dark tower,  
the others had many children  
and lived for a long time  
through many seasons  
and through many  
changes of heart.”