

LOST ROMANTICS AND OTHER PEASANTRIES

One grew up and chanted. One grew up
And the expressions spelled magnanimity,
But the hearts said *shoplifting*. Not outright
Larceny, the kind that befalls foliage
In late autumn, and then later, but quaint
Kleptomania before it took root, its foothold,
Like an ancient tuber, quintessential tuber,
Either the symbol of sustenance or indefatigable
Portent of something self-conscious, something
Dangerous if only because it was aware of itself,
Nothing more threatening than a spud in the earth,
Precisely the fact of a spud in the dirt, waiting
To be pulled up by a bad back and big hands,
Bulbous paws. Normal was always meant to be
Well, normal, but everything was just too quiet,
Everything was too quiet on the streets and we knew.
It's hard to speak out when there's no place
To hide, no place to sequester oneself if just
To get stashed for a moment, just for some respite
Even when there's no need, no stolen goods
Or loss of memory, nothing more mournful
Than when you say po-tah-to and I say...

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