

Deborah Leipziger – Five Poems



Feature

Apple Orchard

We ladder up into the crown
of the tree, skyward
on wooden ladders

Beholden to the rain and light
for the apples their purple dust
on dusky red
their splattering of stars

This longing to cradle
the apples, the trees, my daughters
back when they ran through orchards
up grafted limbs and branches

Heart to heart, the cortlands grow in pairs
as doubles. The sign says
“Use both hands to pick both apples, at the same time”

The apples fall into my open palms
this tugging of heart, this twisting apart

You as a forest

I listen to the shelter of you
the sweeping canopy cradling the day
and night of me
the moon rising in your branches
the stars falling into the sweep of your hair.
I see the feet of your forest
the fingers, the limbs
the concave and convex of you,
the light that falls around us.
I smell your scent of maple,
fern, ivy.

The light serpentine
falling through the rings
of redwoods.

To Become the Beloved

You fold and unfold me
weaving sunset on a loom of clouds.

Sometimes there is no center
just the loom
across which our bodies
weave their stories.

We decipher the pendant knots
unveil flags, untangle ropes,
the lasso, the shipwreck.

The trail of my nails
on the sail of your back.
I honor the totem of you.

Love the folded parts of yourself,
delight in the covering and uncovering.

But the body has always been a writing

A calligraphy
Of arteries and veins
Of promontories and pools
In endless
Platelets and cells which
Travel
Across looms, across time
Threadiness
Cellular
Of thread

Umbilical umbra
Weaves into the placenta
& threshold
That connects me to you
The line
From twin to twin
Born
Early
From linen and limb
The mother
Womb
That untethered
Daughters
My stars, my moons

Note: The lines in italics are drawn from Cecilia Vicuna's poem "With a Little Notebook at the Met"

To the person who wrote to the Dictionary to ask how long love lasts

Love closes
forecloses
rearranges itself
like a window display.

It goes underground,
for years perhaps,
to hibernate
until it is called forward
called forth.
It can rest on wings
and die suddenly on a January night.

Love can live in words
and deeds.
Can be uncovered
Rewound
Recycled
Revisited, rejoined
Reneged.

No one,
not even the lexicographers, know
how long it lasts.

Deborah Leipziger is an author, poet, and professor. Her chapbook, *Flower Map*, was published by Finishing Line Press (2013). In 2014, her poem “Written on Skin” was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Born in Brazil, Ms. Leipziger is the author of several books on human rights and sustainability. She advises companies around the world on social and environmental issues. Her poems have been published in *Salamander*, *Voices Israel*, *POESY*, *Wilderness House Review*, *Ibbetson Street*, and the *Muddy River Poetry Review*. <http://flowermap.net/>