

THE LAST, SWEET-PICKLED PEAR

Robert Grunst

dissolves at the bottom
of the jar like some
tropical fish
in heavy thick-
sugar syrup.

In the sterile-bright
enamel light of the refrigerator
this pear is no grand
inquisitor.

I do not answer,
Water is 90% of
every man.

I think of the gray
canvas strap of the picking-
sack worn across
a migrant worker's
shoulder,

of sweat pressed through
the fabric of his shirt,
of wasps droning over
windfallen fruit
in the sun,

of new wine drunk
as the man rocks with his body
and its uses I cannot
explain.

Sometimes, perhaps, it is
true, enough is never
enough. Perhaps
this pear was picked
by machine

or even now the man is
losing his balance and
knows when he falls
no branch will
stop him.

He will never repeat
his joke of the mid-
wife of pears.

Sometimes, I think, tightening
the lid is always what
happens; I could say
in its grief

this pear could weep;
though, who could tell
such a lie without
shame?

