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Robert Grunst

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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?