

1977

Like Three Fayre Branches from One Root Deriv'd

Robert Hass

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Recommended Citation

Hass, Robert. "Like Three Fayre Branches from One Root Deriv'd." *The Iowa Review* 8.3 (1977): 26-27. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2215>

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Weed / Robert Hass

Horse is Lorca's word, fierce as wind
or melancholy, gorgeous, Andalusian:
white horse grazing near the river dust;
and parsnip is hopeless,
second cousin to the rhubarb
which is already second cousin
to an apple pie. Marrying the words
to the coarse white umbels sprouting
on the first of May is history
but coveys nothing; it is not the veined
body of Queen Anne's lace
I found, bored, in a spring classroom
from which I walked hands tingling
for the breasts that are meadows in New Jersey
in 1933; it is thick, shaggier, and the name
is absurd. It speaks of durable
unimaginative pleasures: reading Balzac,
fixing the window sash, rising
to a clean kitchen, the fact
that the car starts & driving to work
through hills where the roadside thickens
with the green ungainly stalks,
the bracts and bright white flowerets
of horse-parsnips.

Like Three Fayre Branches from One Root Deriv'd / Robert Hass

I am outside a door and inside
the words do not fumble

as I fumble saying this:
it is the same in the dream
where I touch you. Notice
in these poems the thinning out
of particulars. The gate
with the three snakes is burning
symbolically which doesn't mean
the flames can't hurt you.
Now it is the pubic arch instead
and smells of oils and driftwood,
of our bodies working very hard
at pleasure but they are not
thinking about us. Bless them,
it is not a small thing to be
happily occupied, go by them
on tiptoe. Now the gate is marble
and the snakes are graces.
You are the figure in the center.
On the left you are going away
from yourself. On the right
you are coming back. Meanwhile
we are passing through the gate
with everything we know. We go
as fire, as flesh, as marble.
Sometimes it is good and sometimes
it is dangerous like the ignorance
of particulars but our words are clear
and our movements give off light.

The Feast / Robert Hass

The lovers loitered on the deck talking,
the men who were with men and the men who were with new women,
a little shrill & electric, and the wifely women
who had repose & beautifully lined faces
and coppery skin. She had taken the turkey from the oven
and her friends were talking on the deck
in the steady sunshine. She imagined them
drifting toward the food, in small groups, finishing