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Christopher H. Bonney

NOVEMBER

A woman I know fills her riding boots with ginger and skins
off her chaps and lays her naked self down
in bed, a skinny clapper in the moon's feather bell,
bonging, tonight so wildly hung.
As a hinge is a break, so a break's a hinge,
and fall comes hard around, snuffing in pockets
for just a taste of this year's candy corn.
"The gray eye," she calls the self she's now
painting: I skinned a whole horse and went
galumphing through the fields at burning time under
his mane, my muscular beatenness so to sculpt.
I will not be unpacked.
Grab my shoulders. Shake me, silly, we're dancing.
Make all my toenail parings into a heart and feed it to drunkards.
Smear your body with ashes.
Binge.
The world, after all, in a fig all sax-solo inside red
and piano echoey in an Italian cinema in Tibet,
mangled and upstaged.
Once more into the breach, dear
marksmen, this time for a girl who's hiding
in the stalks of snail eyes, who's finally becoming
the tinge of color in a glass of fluid—
a tincture that adds to alcohol all the state
lines crossed in search of fireworks.
A pond ices over from the top, and milk from the inside,
but the ground takes its own good time: mica
at the surface and flint
less so.
Because while mica's the guts
of radios, flint's a mineral for making wee sparks,

and the falling leaves tonight
are worlds like arks in which you can give yourself
away over and over, painlessly,
are windows behind which the world's set on fire, and come,
like lovers, not in prides or flocks, but in memories,
the transitional stage between spring and coal,
the traditional angular singe which, though you grow older,
never grows old.