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Hospital Girl

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leaning forward, away from your clothes, 
that freedom to crush your face into treasure 
because that’s what it’s for. 
The fig, toned dark like organ meat, 
like the thick blood of the liver or a root, 
still no rival to pear or orange or mango, 
to the heavy melon ripeness of a Sunday in July.

Yet we ate figs all summer. Each day 
began dark with a fierce chorus of fighting cocks, 
their cries edging into days like the rosary of Charo’s name, 
like gifts almost off-hand, as though to fuss, shredding colored paper, 
might anger that other namesake, that carrier of tidings, 
with the thought that hoarded presents could take the place 
of news, of observation, of eating what is close at hand.

HOSPITAL GIRL

I like flowers with many petals and watching bag-people on the lawn 
collecting bottles. I like Sammy when he smiles and the light moving on 
the river outside my window. I like biting my nails and the taste and 
smell of olives, green ones, on my fingers long after I’ve eaten them for lunch. I like the night-time and my dreams, if they are not too long. I like 
the early morning before the girl in the next bed is awake and starts 
gasping. I like telling my mother I feel pins in my buttocks when I move quickly, as though they had fallen asleep. I like her meeting the word 
buttocks, eyebrows high and eyes wide. I like the smell of the nurses’ greenish rubber gloves. I like the small bruise on my hand when they 
remove the IV. I like watching it fade. I like the lounge because the 
window opens. I like visitors from school when they bring presents and 
talk softly. I like the gray haired nurse who comes in the middle of the night. I like rubbing the sleep out of my lashes alone each morning. I like 
the way my fingers move in the air. I like breakfast when there’s yogurt.