

CARAND BURNET

We Were Only Folklore

Our fence could do us in. The gate opens
Teasing the henhouse. That way
We go search for wild snapdragons, slowly unfolding.

The air smells like sweet snap peas. But the peas never came
Only breakdowns. We lost every jacket, bee, hornet
No more vegetables, no flowering for our hens, our girls.

So let's bring a garden about. In all the right places
Our girls are starlit, vacant. Weeks depart.
We were at odds staining tea leaves into water.
We were only folklore. We were once waves
Opening our sea-spray mouths.

And those shells you and the hens find.
I lie about them. Claim they are European.
Were never meant to be
On this shore. I have to say
Here I lost your Marigolds, unfolding the atlas.
You listen on but I won't until more shipwrecks.

Can our girls be windswept? Near the pasture
Gilded frames hang around our hens' necks
Framing another is difficult.

I will rummage through
Sunsets to find them, your flowers. Offsetting the curtains
The midnights, eating cantaloupe to keep up late

And our girls. Shaping under kitchen tables
Pecking through leftover fruit skins.

Long before I lost each Marigold
You stood taking an early bus, traveling for seed
The hens and I waited for you.
A Starling's song began. Punctured the dark.
So dawn will slip in for a few hours only.
Only you, hearing this racket
Watched the putting on of dawn
One by one.