

Maude Larke

BLACK AND SOUR

She learned from Zola
how to test the richness
and the fluidity of the blood
with a sure, entire hand
before starting it simmering

and fondling the flesh
and the guts of the chicken
as she readies them for inundation.

Standing over the stove and stirring
in the barely-green afternoon sun
warms her

and I gauge the progress in the preparation
by regularly measuring amid the pungency
the sweetness of the nape of her neck.

During the meal her mouth will liberate
with gorged carrot and burgundy;
the hollow of her elbow
will invent its patchouli.

Tonight I will find
that the tenderest part of her knee
secrets a marine heat
and when I settle between her thighs
she will spark my tongue like vinegar.

BLASON II

Do allow me to rev up
my sentimental naiveté
(to an Elgar soundtrack if you wish)
which gushes even at a frown.

The intent in outward-thrusting lips
is rivets butting through my bones
surer than bolts through storms.

The arm outstretched
the gaze darting along it
are two strong limbs
on a sap-pumping tree.

Even the raised eyebrows
the bewildered face
are doves surprised
by a cross-wind

and the hand to the heart
to show true breadth
is a dove nesting.

Sentiment be praised
(to Ellen Wilber, another good choice)
and breath be scarce
tears be ready
when you shimmer in me.

Maude Larke has returned to writing after years in universities, analyzing others' texts and films, and to classical music as an ardent amateur, after fifteen years of piano and voice in her youth. She was the winner of the 2011 PhatSalmon Poetry Prize and the 2012 Swale Life Poetry Competition.