

## Every Neighborhood Child

*for the mothers*

There are apples beside the road, wild things  
hung by angels for children wandered  
too far from home. Lavish berries too,  
perched on thorns that warn of oncoming winter.

These bountiful bushes draw every neighborhood child  
pedaling by who stops to pick raspberries, blackberries,  
who will come in from play with purple lips,  
scratched wrists, and barely any appetite for dinner.

Bright baby carrots rise like tiny green fingers  
over the geography of Miller's farm. No child can resist  
the tender bite. No young rabbit awaits its mother's permission  
or considers the soil clinging to the root a threat.

This is the menu of summer, with all its delights.  
This is the history of childhood.

This afternoon we threw stones from a rotting trestle  
into uncertain waters below, counted the seconds,  
hoping to hear them hit bottom. No sound at all.  
Nothing but the splash, then a flaccid silence.

Our mothers warned us to stay off the trestle, to not dive  
into the waters below. You don't know what's down there.  
We don't fear the quarry's rippled stillness, its secrets.  
We don't know that, below its green-black mask, it is a grave place.

We don't wonder who may be down there beneath  
these railroad ties, what sodden ghost doomed to remain  
below the surface forever, who waits to catch  
our pebbles, these unbreathing stones that do not speak.