

Luke Brekke

June

June was sick with it, luscious hills green
over the water, the trillium and blue bead lilies
lost in a wood. You should have seen it.
The wind kept crying, kept shaking the leaves
that spread and darkened to hide their branches,
and the streams ran. Children ran out from school,
from the pungent halls and the quiet that June refused,
that June sent packing, that was forced to gather its private coat
to make room for song or intimate whispers
on top of the grass. Ferns uncoiled in cool hours,
the mushrooms pressed spoonfuls of earth
up on their thumbs. We couldn't find you.
The thrushes, the juncos, the warblers
made habitat in our eaves
and with our hair and by the water
I found broken eggs, stained and opened like shirts,
their contents eaten or gone in flight, like an indigo bunting
that travels in darkness, led by stars, its plumage the color
of shadow or sky as it makes its departure.
The ramps grew wild and forced their spice
into their root. We ate them off the hill.
And were stung by nettles. And stung by bees.
And were scratched by green thorn and thistle.
And in the heat wave at night, we turned in carnal sheets,
not sleeping, June seeping into the material densities
of the bed and the sleepless hours drawing out.
And June stretching the days like helium balloons
floating them off, one blue after another,
until we couldn't see them, like swimmers
gone under a green lake, naked and deep.
June was a small explosion in the kernel of a hazelnut,
was rosy petals lit like candles across the rhododendron,
was illiterate so I read to it every night,
the stories it liked best, brave maidens turned to deer,
reaching apples from the trees with slender necks
while the moon glowed and meadow watched,

while the owl flapped a deadly wing and the cities
burned and the sanctions lifted,
and you removed yourself from such profusion
with a single act, a skinny rope, and the next rain
didn't come, and night's edge bled a little quicker
into day and the air changed, got thicker,
and June was gone and then July, whole seasons
and the next ones come darker, on their heels,
with fresh delicacies and pain.