

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

There were twelve pear blossoms on the branch
In the shallow bowl on his table.
As he counted them, he relaxed,
Appreciating fully the careless perfection
Of a universe dealing lavishly in dozens.

Savoring breakfast, he dwelt
At considerable length on his dozens:
The towering shirts, and the socks,
The silver sleeping in twelves,
The dozens of linen and china.
Gratefully, he acknowledged
The doubtless rightness of numbers
That build to a certain sum,
And his day was an ordered, pear branch double six,
For he felt that God had validated twelve.

The eleven pear blossoms on the branch
Shouted to him at dinner,
And his food grew cold on his plate
As he questioned inviolate patterns
So long on the silk of his robe,
And he sharpened thought against eleven,
Seeing twelve fall from every branch.

Norma McLain Stoop