

A California Love Poem

— for my Mother

I smelled of dogs and the breath of weeds.
My mother brought me juice in a tall glass.

Breezes juggled oranges and bright leaves,
and good morning was the color of girls.

A gold butterfly sat down on my knee.
Her wings brushed away a globe of sweat.

All boyhood day was warm with sun and sleep.
And the orange blossoms fell, white as love.

Twisted Apples

(After reading Sherwood Anderson's
Winesburg, Ohio)

Even the smashed
scarecrow
flaked out on
the tumbled fence
is not nearly
as grotesque
as these twisted
apples
that reddens
the hard ground
What puny
specimens
what ruined flesh
But also
what temptation
to try one
to sink the teeth
down deep
and suck for juice
then spit out
the small seeds
against the rude
and ruthless
weather

— David Pearson Etter
Evanston, Illinois