

Hellyer Park

There was no moon that midnight, bitter gusts sliced
through winter branches. We were
the only sign of life. Heavy fog lay
across the damp field; creek
water flooded mud banks. We, creatures of the wind,
escaped from the halos
of city lights and hid our naked selves
under the apple tree.

But Timmy was a romantic. Arms stretched
eyes shut, he fell backwards
on the picnic table—splinters dug; clothes tugged;
red mane caught in my grip.
I mounted him the way Napoleon straddled
his horse Désirée—face
thrust skyward, chest puffed with emperor's pride.
He yielded the same way
Rose apples yield when pressed; I took the first
of Timmy's everything,
the only first that would always matter more
than all his other firsts.

* * *

On a moonless winter night, Timmy took
his life. And though I knew
that love only ends with death in Shakespeare's tales,
I still remembered how
I knew him when we were only seventeen;
how Timmy touched my core—
his earth-brown eyes that saw me as winter's
only goodness. Should I
have loved him more? I shouldn't have left him
in the wind; but like blossoms,
we scattered, lost to the pink at sunrise.
I should've warned Timmy then——
our darkest winter nights would never again be
spent giving or taking love.

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