

Ceres and the Serpent

I remember her eyes,
impenetrable yet kind,
as if she knew secrets
but hid them for my sake.
I, a child in a woman's body,
kneeling before her in the dirt,
palms up, waited.
I can still smell that damp earth—
sweet as honey or sunlight,
wise as all the night sky has witnessed.

She brought forth a single stalk
of yellow grain—
enough to feed all humankind.
She laid one kernel in my hands.
I rejoiced at the smallness
of this perfect fruit.
I put it on my tongue,
bit into the crisp flesh,
and then, I could see—

Behind her wooden chair,
around a stem of wheat,
twined and circled
a Serpent,
skin luminously green
as fresh young maple leaves in spring,
eyes the gold of honey I smelled before,
the gold of the life-giving sun,
of the stars.
I knew her.
I trusted her.