

J. TRENT NUTTING [PICKING APPLES]

THIRD PLACE, WALLACE STEVENS POETRY PRIZE

The moss green fruit bowl's belly cradles two
Apple types. One, I picked up at the Grand Union
Where it withered slowly in plastic
Beneath fluorescent bulbs, gas-ripened in
A Route 5 factory.
The other you plucked direct from the orchard's
Tree, with fingers long and delicate like
Those of aristocrats in Spanish portraits.
I pick a baseball-sized one from the bowl
Whose flesh is the color of yours after a run,
Flecked pink, and hope that when I pop through its
Taut skin later at lunch, I'll taste not only
The chill autumn night that urged its flesh to shelter
Hidden seeds, but also the barely-there
Trace of your flesh's perfume promising
The warm surge of our after-work kiss.