

Two Poems

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Yard-Sitting During the Pandemic

Anna Laura Reeve

Yellow-jacket, tiny
poison packet, swings like a censer,
wafting awareness between every grass clump.

After a night of little sleep, thick cloud cover.
Breezes too slight to be registered by trees
make the grasses quiver.

Apples fall from the tree badly split by storm.
Heavy, dimpled by insects, mottled
and thinly striped, thump.

The belly of the yard rises
and falls. I perch on it
in a folding chair,

teetering for a moment,
until I set my coffee down, finding the correct
center of gravity.

There are none so evil
that grass dies under their feet.

When the neighbor's cat wandered in, a mockingbird flew low
over its head, making a loud chip call, calling chip,
chip, until the cat turned and walked away.

Every Year, Another Invitation to Change Your Life

Anna Laura Reeve

In November sweetshrubs and spicebushes yellow,
dropping bright pendulous leaves
slowly as dipperfuls of honey.

My elderly neighbor finds autumn depressing, saying
everything dies in autumn,

that the trees are catching fire
and burning to bones.
I never understood this.

As a child I saw leaves fall like snowglobe storms
or confetti drops on TV.

I saw the old women of the forest shimmying like flappers
or rocking like congregants catching the Spirit,
hands high above their heads.

Now I see them joyously cutting each others' hair,
shaking off too-tight bras,

baring private trunks striped with stretch marks
for the sun to warm,

I see hackberry leaves taking each others' hands to jump together.

Autumn asks if I know

how to cut my own hair. I used to. I don't.

God never rested on the seventh day, not here in the valley.

It was the fourth day. She took off her bright clothes and fell
into bed.