

HAYDEN SAUNIER

Wooden Bowl of Spangled Fruit

1

Awaiting test results, I dust
each studded fruit, each mini-masterpiece

of bead and sequin pierced by pins
and nailed to shapes of orange, apple,

plum. I use an old Electrolux, attach
the dusting brush, distract myself,

deep breathe. The apple's crowned
with a plastic molded leaf-and-stem

the exact opaque olive green
of my brother's sack of army men,

the ones, when bored with battle strategy,
we'd string up and dangle, man by man,

above a fire kindled between privet hedges
until all poses melted. My brother's brilliance:

making sound effects to match each burning
liquid death. Inside, the aunts were bayoneting

plastic oranges with silver pins, while we,
safe in a green thicket, marveled at the varied

shapes our torture and disfigurement
could make. No two men died alike.

2

What were
those women
thinking,
powdered,
perfumed,
girdled,
thimble,

→

punctuating
private talk
with tiny
hammer taps,
brows softly
furrowed
as pink
polished thumbs
bore fiercely
down?

Admit. Admit.
Just need
to fix
in place,
hold tight,
secure, make
beauty stay
by making
beauty hard
and faceted,
no corruption
so no
nourishment
and nothing
ever to be
bitten into,
sparkling
wholes.

3

The silver pins begin to gleam.
An unexpected shine that makes me think

of Saint Sebastian—arrows shot through flesh
the way the silver pierces ruby bead to shiny dish,

drives, spikes them into the form.
Impaled, Sebastian lived; that was his miracle.

Until they killed him more dependably: his body
beaten, body dumped down a Roman privy shaft.

Held to the light, this jeweled apple beams.
Turn it inside out: the world's a globe of nails.

4

I line up rhinestoned
 peaches, purple beaded

grapes, the scarlet plum
 with darker scarlet cleft,

a ruby apple, gilded pear
 along the shallow sill

of my sun-struck kitchen window
 a chorus line of pastied

Vegas showgirls, sparkling
 beneath the cotton curtain,

and the ordinary kitchen sink,
 the shelves, the wooden floor

go dizzy, shine with jazz flash
 colored star-flecks all slow

dancing to the ticking
 of the ordinary clock and still

the room fills up with how
 the telephone won't ring.