

Dorianne Laux

TWILIGHT

My daughter set whatever had begun
to wither or rot on the rail
of the backyard deck. Pear, apple, over-ripe
banana, in October a pumpkin
that by August had gone to dust.
She took photos of the process: pear
with its belly bruised, weekly
growing more squat, the dark spot spreading.
Orange caving in at the navel.
Banana skins tanning like animal hides.
As their outsides grew tough,
their insides grew moist – a crack in the crust
and the dank pudding spewed out.
Pear neck at half-mast, pear bottom black,
pear neck sunk into the drooped shoulders of pear.
She observed and recorded the progress, watched
the realm of the solid transmute and dissolve,
documenting the musk-fragrant, incremental
descent, its delectable inevitability.
She delighted in her entropic world
with complete abandon – never expressing
repulsion or remorse, only taking
her deliberate daily photos: pumpkin
with its knifed hat tipped jauntily
above carved eyes, pumpkin sinking sweetly
into its own orange face, buckling, breaking,
sweating in sunlight, mold webbed and glowing
through a triangle nose, the punched-out smile
a grimace slipping down its furred chin.
When did she become disinterested, distracted
by her life? Where to go? What to do?
Did her socks match? One day she left
her dark harvest behind and walked
to the rink where her skate blades
shimmed the ice, inscribing girlish circles
on the blue skirl of the deserted rink.
Or she lingered at the stalls until twilight,
brushing down her favorite horse, sugar
cubes in her pockets, an apple in her purse.
She actually had a purse. Filled to the clasp

with the evidence of her life: lip gloss,
stubby pencils and colored pens, a little book
she wrote in faithfully, archiving last
names that began with A on the A page,
BUs on the B, a billfold with money
and a photo ID, her own face gazing out
through the tiny plastic window.
She stared back at herself like any ordinary girl,
not a girl obsessed with ruin and collapse
who stalked her backyard with a camera.
Something else had caught her eye.
See her lift the tawny jewel
to his whiskered lips, her hand level,
her fingers flat and quivering. Look
at the gratitude in her face
when he takes the first dangerous bite.