

# SOLOMON'S SEAL

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## **The October Horse**

We've crossed the Blue Ridge divide and can whisper our thoughts, at their first birth, to trees unused to our native tongue. A clean shave and a tumbler of spirits. The corn spirit lurks in the guise of a hare. The trick is to do as little as possible, but quitting will kill you.

Fasten purslane around your bed as protection against magic. Purslane will fasten your loose teeth. Our neighbor told us of an owl, which caused a power disruption, and was roasted. Less meat than a muscovy was the declaration. Destined to lead apes into hell was the appraisal of the old maid.

Linden-scented soap and the lowing of a cow in the coppice beyond the cottage. It's foolish to rob the last house on a dead-end lane. It's either Blackbird or Goat island, depending on whose pastry you're tasting. One sign marks a Cherokee victory, another a defeat.

## **Promise Of Noon**

Forced to rely on faith that autumn's foliage exists, low moon over Nantahala range. Check the onion's skin to know what winter holds in store. Turned green by duckweed, far away snakes the Tallahatchie, rock of waters.

In a greenhouse made of glass plate negatives, drinking brandy smuggled on horseback, it was assessed the peak was upon us, Poseidon discovered chickpeas, the Opimian vintage of 121 BC was still spoken of with reverence seventy-nine years after the birth of Christ.

Only a fool would choose a radish over a herring. Lit in the garden, falling in the eggplant. Corn ripens as much by night as by day. Darker than the inside of a wolf's mouth. A swift witness wouldn't try to coax fire through concrete.

A disgruntled initiate will don a papier-mâché helmet and confuse a symbol with reality. If your characters don't vacillate you have no play.

## **Sacred But Fatal**

Cool summer morning, waysides  
starred with daisies, wayfarers  
ever mindful of Adam Bell's name.  
Jupiter's Beard will ward off a tempest.  
The olives are safe under Minerva.

Consult the Book of St. Albans if  
your hawk is ill. Hold the blooms  
of vervain up to the fire for a vision  
of the future. In a frenzy, the devoted will  
unman themselves while women bake bread.

To offer fennel is to flatter, but  
basil is a sign of devotion. It's our  
misfortune to have been conceived. But  
since we're here, let's enjoy the green  
figs born of a twice-bearing tree.

## **Acknowledge The Corn**

Resident celibates, and those of the feminine gland, fear not the frotteur, waiting for the parade. It's not a feel to worry on. There is a tree in Costa Rica that has leaves with waxy fingerprints.

Like a Turk pouring your gin, or owning a three-legged sled dog, a day for picking clover is all this is. The barometer indicates a sneeze in the parlor. A feline in the attic, in the recumbent position.

Tell again the dream of Bedouins and falcons. Who chased off Napoleon's little friend? Jonas Henry was the first man in England to carry an umbrella. What a figure he must have cut.

## **Movement In The White Mist**

Truth be known, if the food supply  
dwindled to shoestrings, noblemen  
would stoop to pick potatoes. Remember  
the feast of sparrows in Constantinople.  
Eat your Brie with the confidence of Charlemagne.

If you come across a March Hare, give it a nickname,  
in thoughtful silence, before you shoot it. The Aztec  
prized the fur of ocelot, though many preferred the margay.

Without the cape and coal you cannot cross the threshold.  
Motley garments of a treacherous jester.

Pick the lock early. The first motions of the fiery heavens.  
A universal excitement. Ask the crocodile why he loves the sandpiper.

## **Shadow Light**

At the Meeting of the Stones the bones of a criminal would be crushed and a feast would ensue. My bones ache with a knowing at the beginning of Fall, and before a rain.

Some myths begin with the theft of fire, or a hunter on the trail of a wounded deer. We're separated by degrees of illumination and the shape of our vowels.

Trust a palfrey to be gentle, a diligent songbird to lead you to sour cherries. Comets disappear as quickly as cats in the presence of coyotes.

How a piece of music burrows a sense of place in the mind. To hear a familiar melody in a foreign outpost. The philanthropist gives a concert hall to the rural community because he loves the local flora.

This system is not perfect, but the flaws are integral to the work. Cold water aids a wound by tightening the skin, but warmth is more soothing.

## **The Whispering Campaign**

Rule sixty-two reminds us we shouldn't  
take ourselves too seriously. Saint Hilarion  
shunned the circus but tamed a Bactrian camel.

In our hearts we should hold out pity  
for both cattle and kings; the terrified,  
drunk and distracted.

Is it not enough to have sense and motion?  
To be healed by the same hand that first  
inflicted the wound.

Choose which form of liberation you can  
live with. What is to be practiced and what  
is to be put aside.

Plant your garden away from black walnuts  
and build your home within a fence of safety  
and peace.

WHIT GRIFFIN has had work in *First Intensity*, *Octopus*, and *Forklift, Ohio*, among other journals. *Wanhope*, a chapbook-clutch of poems, was published by Longhouse in 2008. Scantly Clad Press recently published *Rural Radio*, a collaborative poem written with Andrew Hughes.

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