

## WHEN MY PARENTS WERE APPLE TREES

In the summer of my thirteenth year  
I made a hammock from old sheets,

knotted it between two apple trees  
that stood in our small backyard.

Both gnarled, one propped at the hip,  
together, they bore my weight

as I drowsed through the thick  
secret rustle of hot afternoons

a notebook across my knees,  
each page a fretwork of shadow and light.

I scowled away Mum, bearing juice  
and Dad when he checked the knots.

It was to the trees I whispered  
and they bent their heads to listen

as I gently swung, an unripe fruit  
carried like one of their own -

green and troubled beneath the skin,  
a dark starring of pips at the heart.

When the windfalls came, I tasted  
my own wasp-sharpness in their flesh

until Mum showed me how to bake them -  
just a little sugar, a gentle heat.