

Two Poems

Sarah P. Strong

Pastoral at the March

Our whole world stomps between us,
her small hands tugging ours along

until she breaks for a billowing fabric sun
rounding the corner of 6th Avenue.

Watch me run she calls,
just as she called to us that day

at the farm, her thin limbs
flashing as she flew

past the barn, past the flowers
alive with honeybees

and down the best hill,
ours for rolling, until we fell

together into clover, everything
three and green, sweet as breath and hair.

But here the air is full of signs,
each waving one more danger,

one more anger, one more shining *should*;
voices rise and chant, the long river

of bodies floods the avenue
and someone's painted, along the sides

of each gray building,
the rising water level, marked in blue.

Love, what have we done—
I want to seize her, spirit her away,

as if I would unmake her
in the face of what we've made.

As if we'd ever give up
that hour in the field that day,

her fingers stained
with grass and earth

slipping from ours to run ahead
so we would chase her,

her laugh streaming behind her
in a banner, and we caught her,

and disappeared
into a tunnel of trees.

Footnote

In the wilderness
of desert he eats
locusts and honey

eats one by one
a plague of beaded eyes
hard shells

from whose louvered folds
wings lift

In the branches
a wild hive

alive with bodies
deep in the curves
of the combs

dark bee sap drips
into his tattered hands

his mouth
a flood of sweetness

the gold river swallowing
hard bits of carapace
whose soft innards
keep him

his urine so sweet
flies follow him

and when he squats
in the bushes

undigested wings
gleam in his soil
like flecks of mica

