

# Season Songs

By *Lyn Lifshin*

## Indian Summer

after the plum  
snow, after  
branches split  
wires after 4  
days I slept in  
the house with  
no heat under  
17 quilts your  
voice a light  
house flare  
someone on a  
raft sees dis  
solving after  
I had to call  
you from a pay  
phone after  
you unplugged  
your phone 20  
days before  
the last guava  
and apricot  
leaves twitched  
from the maple  
your eyes a  
mirage in the  
blue sheets

## August First

jade wraps the  
crushed walnuts  
in shadow jays,  
squirrels green  
leaks thru shutters  
under my hair I  
walked out into  
its wetness someone  
walking into the  
ocean off Cape Anne  
feeling salt sting,  
feeling shells moving  
into my skin my  
mother and I that  
year at Dennis Port  
seals water breaks  
and slams together  
nudging going under,  
surfacing the shore  
gets smaller my  
mother gets smaller

## Writing Class Syracuse Winter

write he said looking  
like an even craggier  
Lincoln your impressions  
the next 4 days, details  
of a walk across campus.  
Even now I remember I  
wore a strawberry wool  
skirt, matching sweater.  
There was bittersweet  
near the Hall of Languages.  
I curled in a window  
ledge of a cave in Crouse,  
an organ drifting thru  
smooth warm wood, I  
could let the wine  
dark light hold me, slid  
on the ice behind where a  
man with a blue mole  
picked me up, my notes  
scattering up Comstock.  
Tom tights, knees snow  
kissed the skin off. I  
was hypnotised by that  
huge growth said yes  
tho I only half remembered.  
Upstairs icicles clotted,  
wrapped glass in gauze.  
There must have been some  
one who didn't call. Blue  
walls, ugly green bedspread.  
Dahlia popping gum, eating  
half a tuna sandwich before  
we'd lie in bed with  
the lights out, wonder what  
it would be like to have  
Dr. Fox's red beard  
close to us as we  
braided and rubbed our  
mahogany hair dry and I  
tried to figure out what to  
do with the bittersweet,  
tom knees, ragged maples,  
didn't believe I'd ever  
have anything to write about.

## The Child We Won't Have Is Crowding Us in the Front

seat of the Riviera  
taking all the air  
up, howling so the  
light thru the maples  
goes away. When I  
try to move toward  
you, it bops me in  
the stomach, the car  
veers toward the  
edge. With the baby's  
arm thrashing you  
can't begin to try  
to lip read. A torn  
branch slashes thru  
rolled down glass.  
I give up writing  
for an even bigger  
illusion, stop  
dancing to cook  
and bear this child.  
I never knew so much  
of me could feel like  
feet that had danced  
6 hours every day  
imprisoned in  
stirrups, waiting  
for what won't come

## Roses in the Snow, Scotland

1 40lb cabbage  
out of gravel  
the spirit nymphs  
of nature he said  
they're in the stone  
we talk to them  
believe in elves  
gnomes one woman  
got a thousand  
messages after the  
lettuce I planted  
died the spirit said  
thin out the weak  
leaves I heard  
a sound like a  
woman moaning now  
green spills up  
over the garden wall  
presses toward the  
house like a woman  
who left coming  
back to reclaim  
clothes that  
aren't hers

► **LYN LIFSHIN** is an editor, performer, and poet whose writings are featured in virtually every anthology of recent writing by women; her work has appeared in numerous literary journals, and in *Ms.* and *Rolling Stone*. She has edited a series of books of women's writing, including *Tangled Vines*, *Ariadne's Thread*, and *Unsealed Lips*. In all, more than 80 of her books and chapbooks have been published; titles include *Black Apples*, *Shaker House Poems*, *Raw Opals*, and *Kiss the Skin Off*. She is the subject of a recent documentary, *Not Made of Glass*.

Lifshin's first published poem was in the *Syracuse 10*, to which she contributed while a member of SU's Class of 1960 (under the name Lyn Lipman). She now resides in Niskayuna, New York, and travels widely to read her works.

