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.
Torn 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,
torn 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.

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