For the Calico Tiger/ Cat From Next-door Who Sleeps In my Green Tomatoes

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Cover Page Footnote
"Third Prize Winner" Appeared in the issue: October 1997.

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Third Prize Winner

For the Calico Tiger/Cat
From Next-door Who Sleeps In my Green Tomatoes

his cat mouth sweats
cat sweat
sprawling on his spine
against my basil sweater
smelling of wet earth
he leans
yawning
onto a shoulder of soil
no longer restless
but
breathing fleshy hours
thick as grapefruits
filling his gut with
whole boned skies
before pulling his
lower half
home

—Marisa Viele

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Rising out of the ground
like Neptune’s trident,
rising out of the ground
and covering all in its fatigued strength,
rising out of the ground
overlooking Philadelphia, overlooking me
while I stand cloaked in words,
inside where I roam over bleached tiles,
where I roam among Monet and Warhol,
come with me to this place,
come travel past bypasses of granite,
bypasses smelling of fir and spruce and pine,
come here with me,
we’ll steal the portraits and
hang them from trees
where dirt sleeps and rain falls and people walk,
we’ll lay the sculptures amid clutter and poetry,
we’ll see the art outside with no place to hide,
come here with me,
where buildings huddle together sharing warmth,
where lights hang on trees,
where our nation was born and
I sit underneath the museum cloaked in words,
come here with me
and we’ll listen to Coltrane,
we’ll wander the streets in a
glazed dream-like haze,
“If you tune the radio right you can hear
Sting singing to Beethoven’s ninth”
and if I speak let three words be enough,
but here I am in Philadelphia
underneath stars and trees and
among artists and musicians
who are all being overlooked by the museum
which I stand underneath cloaked in words.

—Mark Bowers