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## First Harvest

Elizabeth Crowell

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## Crowell: First Harvest

### FIRST HARVEST

Elizabeth Crowell

When the girl comes out of the garden  
at the end of the road,  
where the tall grass starts,  
and the brown pond water  
stinks in the heat, in the layer of cloud  
of mosquitoes, the bullfrog's groan,

when the girl comes out of the garden,  
fireflies flit straight from her dark hair.  
Her dress is out of her arms,  
around the white rush of her belly,  
her eyes ringed and tired, bare feet in tiptoe  
over the gravely dead end.

When she comes out of the garden,  
she calls to me,  
hand outstretched, father behind her,  
bending, picking at the green,  
mother on a boulder,  
knees up, slapping her own arms.

The girl comes out of the garden  
to offer me everything so far,  
the single cherry tomato harvested  
half-yellow, small as a marble.  
I say I couldn't take it as it comes to me.  
She says to wash it before I eat it

and wipes her hands on her limp sleeves.  
She is done; she turns back into herself,  
a stranger to me, goes back to the garden,  
where the rows rise in the darkness,  
stalks lean where they are tied to stakes,  
as if to wait again for what she can give away.