

ITALIAN PLUMS

for Sarah Lantz

We climb up lichen-encrusted limbs,
to pluck purple-black fruit,
protected with white powder
that hides their sheen.

We are inundated with plums,
burdened by bounty.

Why do we merit
this small happiness:
plums boiling down in the big stainless
steel pot, mason jars brimming with jam,
brown paper bags bulging
with enough for everyone.

If only this plethora of plums could bring you back,
but their days are even shorter than yours.
They have burst their skins
and are staining pavement.

You were alive, but are no longer,
and will not savor the juice
of even one small plum.

Willa Schneberg

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