

Diptych to a Former Self, Seeking Eden

i. Firstfruits

How to hear God's voice:

Take your wife's hand as

she reclines on the table,
her bare abdomen a tight

dome beneath the doctor's
roaming touch. Believe

his witness of your daughter:
"She's like an apple

in a water balloon." Lean
against the sentence, settling

into consolation and release
from the worry stirred

by the car accident. Turn
to the monitor. Watch

your fruit embellish
the screen, her shameless

repose, her pulse, her
fluid breaths submerging

the room, baptizing you in
grace and expectation.

Sound out her heart's
insistent whispering. Trill

with syllables translated
from the knowledge tree

the autumn God called on
Adam and Eve and asked

why their seed was so suddenly
ripe with blood.

ii. Landscape, with Figures

How to be remembered:
Senesce with plants. Blur

into gardens: pansies
(some salmon, some

white-tipped pink),
geraniums, tulips, alyssum

to right and left;
a daisy patch behind you;

a thin aspen stand
by the property line,

branches verdant, trunks
skirted by juniper bushes—

proof you beatified Earth,
anointing soil with sweat

and breath and hands
etched by years

of gathering ground
around rootball and seed.

Pose in Sunday-best, Adam
to your Eve, rib-to-rib in your

sideyard, your shoulders
trim with reserve, arms

straight, hands anchored
to your thighs, she at ease,

tulips cradled in her hands,
legs poised to step

beyond the frame, to
welcome passersby

into the snapshot. Give way
to the shadow of your long-dead

oak, its bare limbs like a palm
opening to sky, each eulogized

with the vines you
planted years ago

to keep the diseased tree
green.