

THREE POEMS BY CILLA McQUEEN

Short Story, 1984

I went out on the verandah to have a look at the evening. Matthew came out too & put his chin on the deck. Alvin came out & skirted him then jumped down the steps to see the children flashing past. Matthew flops over on his side & sighs, looking at the sky. A bird cheeps, a small boy yells to one over this side, You don't tell the truth, you're going to get told off! And yippee! there is thunder. He yells, I heard that noise before you, there's going to be a big storm! Christopher, they yell. Come over here, you're going to get told off, we're having a good game! Their voices are like little jazz trumpets. Christopher! Christopher! He whizzes back down the road on his bike. Thunder rattles & slams in the west. The air is still as water & the water still & grey. Ducks crack & seagulls sew it up. A man says, it won't be long. The air is darkening quickly. Alvin races back. Matthew looks worried. The cabbage tree rubs, hens go crazy, the air splits & drops pat all over the leaves slowly & faster till they waggle. Car starter, motor go, whizz past round the bend. Child whoop, the rain gets thicker. Lightning! One two three rattle bang thunder spreads a million fingers over a drum. There is gold sun & no rain yet on the hills across the harbour. Hush, wishing continuous whiteness, it comes down in vertical lines softer & louder. Alvin miaows. Down like a full white bucket. Matthew has gone inside. Alvin is chasing a peg. The air has turned to straight water lines splitting on the glossy path. Alvin goes to the edge to see. The children are running home yelling. The sky has gone cream & blue milk, the garden is overwhelmed, the trees are battered. Rain comes inwards under the roof & I get wet ankles. Rain buffets a soaking man running up the road. Flash the lightning & thunder pummeling overhead, all shining white & swept by the new cold wind. I go in, I saw a change in the weather.

Wild Sweets

what I mean by
love? a terrorist incident
a torn artery an electric arc a
touch without fear
hand in a flame
leather seduction cup of tea
curly rose cushion scrambled eggs
stroke wheel stomp stiletto
in the arch of the foot
spearing the bones
sucking wild sweets
without word talk, it's
not that I love for any at all
thing to get from you
but my learning to cease
expectation.

Oh Cinderella

one or the other
never exactly both
virtual particles
subatomic pumpkins
oh Cinderella
nuclear glue