

Cynthia Sowers

Three Still Lives, 2011

Asparagus Ascendant

A serving of asparagus, blanched, then chilled
to bring out the green; a vinaigrette sheen;
lemon curls circle a scepter of thyme
in gay ostentation;
bread awaits butter's pale stroke;
a knife beside the plate at rest
where a blue checked cloth unfurls.

These elements partially pre-exist the order
in its perfection, of gathering and placing for use,
yet finally overwhelmed by beauty –
always excessive, superabundant;
more than we need;

More than the blood drenched carcass,
belly torn and dragged, shivering with ants,
in panic defense against encroachment
from the empty plain.

Still Life with Quince

October adorns this singular fruit
resembling a pear, but more difficult, knobby,
rebarbative; requiring procedures
of one sort or another –
even the irrevocable blade
of frost – to release
its gold.

Arrayed on fine seamed linen
creased into peaks;
enthroned in the ruffed leaves
of gardens, bedchambers, promiscuous
balconies; the deepening blue
of amorous skies; within
shadowed limbs, it offers
a grateful perfume.

Still Life with Flying Window

As close as they are, as generous under the hand,
the bunch of carrots, a summer squash, and turnips'
startling outburst of greens

yield when a window sails into view –
magisterial, glittering, rational in framing and spacing
of course; but seductive, as if ineluctably poised

at the top of the temple, wings open to the four winds:
an invitation to consider and to know not just the garden
and the abundant insolence of rabbits,

but long rays probing stones miles away and ages past,
moist mosses still trembling, lifting; electrical storms hurling
fire through networks hidden to every eye but one –

Done! But for the shadow crossing the airy pane, a brief curved
light – a comet falling across the dark lashed white.