SHAUNA PAULL

stepping down her porch stairs

soft sough of bough at the joining place, the fence failing into dusk and like a body, the silence gathers me in and not away. there is my old friend I am hurting, the even-breathing of her wakefulness in which is hidden rupture, a child’s into sorrow, tears I want to flesh again

the way a doe calms an orchard, leaf-edged, mulled in shadow; a woman stepping down her porch stairs to a river, any river, treble stone round stone of her girlhood roughened in undercurrent and not away. there is her granite vigil I share, the lambent bend of water she was watching for a sign, sign of her stopped voice. there was that girl in the women’s prison, her up-hill accumulations, the whole body of her death hung in linens, not away this young girl, she, the silence; and that boy on the street in my city, his cardboard roof, his h.i.v., tagged thinning wrist, sculpture of his jaw, its laboured life—his eyes – singing another world; and there is the one who troubles me with ringing throes of laughter, with unanswerable longings, one who would salt this damage, this waste, and stands away, calling—leaf, now, fruit, fall to earth, heart—though its silence gathers me in and with it now this answer, sap-serried, not without aching, this hard to hold desire for an apple in every hand.

Shauna Paul1 is a mother and poet living in Vancouver. Her poetry has appeared in several literary journals across the country including, Room of One’s Own, Dandelion, Event, and CV2.