

Two Poems

Daria Cullen

Chocolate Orange

Green and gold hang from the branches
of the drooping pine and
gold beads weave through the mementos of our childhood as
the tv turns blue. We sigh in contentment
at the adventures of Jo, Beth, Amy, and Meg.

Tomorrow, we would receive chocolate oranges in our
handmade stockings—
the same every year. They would be wedged
at the bottom, filling out the knitted toe.
A handy placeholder.

Always, the six of us tried our best to save and section
the small gift
throughout the chilled brown months
of the new year.

Afterwards, I would remember
the scene in little women where the sisters
were all gifted sunlit oranges.
My mother told me it was a luxury.

Though, I didn't need that to be explained,
as I kept the reflective blue foil wrapped
carefully around the orange-tinged chocolate
for months to come.

September

Inside—a child rolls around,
Sticks his feet into your side,

Lies on your lungs and
Answers to the sound of the father's voice.

Gains an ounce a day and kneads his tiny fist
By your hip.

A deer in the quiet morning field wanders off,
Not to be seen again

For a while.
The small squirrel runs from hollow in tree to tree,

Fixing its patchwork nest of
Burnt-marshmallow brown.

The stark overbearance of summer blue leads to
Grey and white,

Fluff and smog.
A bite and gnawing wind caresses,

The tree branches ripple in
Stagnant puddles.

The season greets
Death as

The vivid greens that have been made anew from forest fires
Are dying.

The color of earth
Rises up to the sky.

Deep brown and roiling red
What a strange blending of time—

This month of September.

Daria Cullen is an English MA student at the University of North Dakota. After many long years in academia, she looks forward to graduating this spring and reading and writing as much as she can possibly fit into her schedule. In her poetry, she reflects on her childhood in the backwoods of Louisiana, and her subsequent move to an oil boomtown in North Dakota.