



Colin Oliver Wild Strawberries



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Wild Strawberries

haiku and prose poems

sapling planted
he gives the stem a last
finger touch

sparrows grounded
heads above the glow
of buttercups

blossom light
all day falling
magnolia

this shepherd's purse
receiving us
at the wayside

July has a perfume here. An avenue of lime trees with high mistletoe and jackdaws in a hurry. My friend stamps along. He lives in constant discord. Unpredictable. He aims to see the shire horses in the pasture. One steps up, powerful, stately, and snorts at our presence. My friend begins to sing, his voice low and resonant. It's a lullaby. His lifted palm meets the soft muzzle of the horse.

where the butterfly
has led us
wild strawberries

over the river
my friend returns
in a curlew's lilt

hares sit tall
in the stubble field
shimmer

meteorites
our breath attuned
to the night sky

This low bank has a wide river view. In the shallows a heron stops to bustle its wings. Refreshed, it bends a leg and sets its bill. On the water there's a sprinkle of fire. White sailboats. Rumours of their passing run to the shore. We follow the path through seedheads of grass and rise to a cliff above the water. Clouds are building far down the sky. Down where rivers meet and end in the sea.

shelling beans
gulls overhead
come for the plough

the crane-fly
clings to its shadow
on the ceiling

his veined hand
raising a glass
at the birthday meal

the last time
she hangs her tea towel
neatly on the rail

sky blackening
in the doorway the dog
nudges my hand

reading the wreaths
at the grave
ink blurred with rain

frost murmuring
a wren's flight
into hawthorn

snowy foxhole
a paw-print
pressed to glass

switching windows
we move from moonset
to sunrise

pillows plumped
the child rests a hand
on her forefinger

Spring comes streaming and we're under its flow. The air is suddenly filled with pollen. The birch catkins are breathing. There's a whisper to them. New leaves on the maple are waxy. Cowslips insist that yellow is the colour of the meadow. The commonplace unmakes me. I'm a step ahead of the dandelions. Hundreds stand with their high-headed clocks fielding the sunlight.

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