Deaf-Mute in the Pear Tree

By P. K. Page

His clumsy body is a golden fruit
    pendulous in the pear tree

Blunt fingers among the multitudinous buds

Adriatic blue the sky above and through
    the forking twigs

Sun ruddying tree’s trunk, his trunk
    his massive head thick-nobbed with burnished curls
    tight-clenched in bud

(Painting by Generalić. Primitive.)

I watch him prune with silent secateurs

Boots in the crotch of branches shift their weight
    heavily as oxen in a stall

Hear small inarticulate mews from his locked mouth
    a kitten in a box

Pear clippings fall
    soundlessly on the ground
Spring finches sing
    soundlessly in the leaves

A stone. A stone in ears and on his tongue

Through palm and fingertip he knows the tree’s
    quick springtime pulse

Smells in its sap the sweet incipient pears

Pale sunlight’s choppy water glistens on
    his mutely snipping blades

and flags and scraps of blue
    above him make regatta of the day

But when he sees his wife’s foreshortened shape
    sudden and silent in the grass below
    uptilt its face to him

then air is kisses, kisses
stone dissolves

his locked throat finds a little door
and through it feathered joy
flies screaming like a jay
