

The Rose

By Jean Valentine

a labyrinth,
as if at its center,
god would be there—
but at the center, only rose,
where rose came from,
where rose grows—
& us, inside of the lips & lips:
the likenesses, the eyes, & the hair,
we are born of,
fed by, & marry with,
only flesh itself, only its passage
—out of where? to where?

Then god the mother said to Jim, in a dream,
Never mind you, Jim,
come rest again on the country porch of my knees.

Jean Valentine, "The Rose" from Little Boat © 2007 by Jean Valentine and reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press. www.wesleyan.edu/wespress

Source: Little Boat (Wesleyan University Press, 2007)