

As Rob Turns 30

All day I have prowled the house
swatting flies

the weather has broken

Against a lilac sky a bat
hurtles over the house
in the wind
drinking it dry

A few sparrows
fought the wind this evening
to gain height over the house
but could not

One night in summer
we went to pick the pears
abandoned for eight years
along the mountain river
cider pears
from Normandy

They dried our lips
with tannin

After two years the cider
is still working
undrinkable

It sits in a dark cellar
with white crickets
that have never seen the sun

I found the apples
on a tree
in the ditch
mis-shapen
and stung with worms

We first tasted them
with slow care
over cider

and again
on a slow walk home
under icy stars

and again tonight
from a graft

That was the year
of fungus on old trees

every growth different
with the colors of starlight

or ice
or human hands

this is the year with clouds
like thin rapids overhead
for a few hours
and then only light

It is late we sit over coffee
with slices of apple
all flavors in one apple
flowering on the tongue

It is the taste
in which we are all things
that move through a field of vision
without making a sound

There is a heavy crop of weedseeds
in the garden

Today I did not pull them
but only mowed them down

Harold Rhenisch