

**Cherries in the Snow Tree**      by Mary Meriam

Did the cat find the cherries in the snow tree?  
 She is so certain she smells them, or something  
 hanging from the porch maybe. Snow, porch,  
 windows of interest, her paws hustle lightly,  
 she is the center of interest and no, she and snow  
 aren't very good friends.

Religion isn't holy, I thought in church once.  
 There was a sign: God is Love, and I liked that.  
 Let me not be a nun like my friend Oak  
 but she escaped. O God, my mind is a hole  
 disappearing in the edifice of a cathedral,  
 the one I never saw in person.

I thought if I had enough yarn  
 I could knit my mind closed,  
 finish what was left undone  
 at the mistake of my birth.  
 Lucky my brain had a thought,  
 but my mind stays open.

This bowl was Sappho's bowl  
 because she loved women  
 and wanted to save women.  
 Red but a soft soothing red,  
 red but gentle, red but dancing,  
 redish, and then revolutionary.

A man offers a red flower to a green horse.  
 The man has a purple hat lifting into the sky.  
 A hand has three rings of mysterious meaning.  
 A black dog inspects the field, and a bird  
 feeds a little person in her nest, perhaps the artist.  
 Why is our life so sad and so full of happiness?

Only a shadow, Redon, a woman once?  
 She can no longer recognize the scent of poppies  
 because her life is caught in winter,  
 a brushstroke of sorrow in a vase.  
 The vase shines a little lightly, the only light,  
 and the orange petals stare into nothing.

I drag myself away from the screen

to climb the roof and look at the moon  
climbing higher in the deep blue with white clouds  
like leaves rustling, while mother makes for me  
a bed of dreams with a pink blanket.  
Daffodils will fill my dreams tonight.

Terrifying flames and plumes of sparks  
and a strange shape, like a chalk outline  
of a dead person, burning, burning, burning  
in this valley, mountains in the background,  
and the sky of clouds hovering in the distance.  
What will become of us?