

Bud Break

Jen Karetnick

As still as wine, the pool robed in blueness.
Soon the dun robins will mistake plate glass
for passage, though the intervals will be
unpredictable, while on the live oak trees
the blue jays polish themselves like chefs' knives.
Then the bees will leave their hidden hives

to circle the tomatoes, tiny hives
of green, born of yellow and blueness,
petals dried like butter on picnic knives
or the smear of a child's lips on glass,
and the canker squad will inspect the trees
for the citrus disease they expect to be

the demise of limes and oranges. Be
cautious – these men are known by their hives
of sawdust, ground from unimpeachable trees
whose leaves cast only shadows of blueness.
Later, this summer, we will pour into this glass
juice pummeled from mangos, poke straws like knives

deep into syrupy pulp, flash paring knives
over the seals of rum bottles that bewilder
sweaty hands when curved around glass
that itself has been left in the sun, hives
of condensation running down blueness,
label sticky as if with the sap of trees.

Poison ivy, some say, is kin to mango trees
and the itch goes about business like knives,
creeps over the skin so much red the blueness
of veins, those ivy-curved locks, can only be
thought of as twigs. What are a few hives
when a robin has met shatter-proof glass,

before its eye, in profile, turns to glass
and it plummets to the roots of trees,
stunned the way winter quiets the hives,

flung quivering as blades of jackknives
are released from their hasps? Only to be
scratched, as one turns away, under sky-blueness,

as glass deflects rains of branches or knives,
the mango trees break into bud with help from bee
hives, and brighter jays polish their blueness.

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“Bud Break”

Biography

Jen Karetnick is the author of the chapbooks *Necessary Salt* (Pudding House Publications, 2007) and *Bud Break at Mango House* (Portlandia Press, September 2008), which won The Portlandia Group’s bi-annual chapbook competition. Her third collection, *Eve and After*, was a finalist in the Women of Words chapbook competition. Her poems have appeared in journals including *Barrow Street*, *Cimarron Review*, *Gastronomica*, *Georgetown Review*, *Greensboro Review*, *North American Review* and *River Styx* and are forthcoming in *Alimentum Journal*, *Blood Lotus*, *Folly* and *OCHO*. She is a 2005 recipient of a Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Award for a lyric poem and a finalist in the 2009 Patricia Dobler Prize. She received an MFA in poetry from University of California, Irvine and an MFA in fiction from University of Miami.

Jen works as the features editor for *Wine News*; the dining critic for *MIAMI Magazine*; the neighborhood columnist for *Biscayne Times*; and a freelance food-travel writer for publications such as *Chile Pepper*, *Florida Travel & Life*, *ForbesTraveler.com*, *Porthole Magazine*, *Relish*, *SheKnows.com* and more. She teaches creative writing to grades 6-12 at the Miami Arts Charter School. She is the author of *Around Miami with Kids* (Fodor’s/Random House, 2000) and co-author of the cookbook *Raw Food/Real World: 100 Recipes to Get the Glow* (HarperCollins, 2005) and the fashion craft book *Born-Again Vintage* (Potter Craft/Random House, December 2008). She lives in Miami Shores on the last remaining acre of a historic mango plantation with her husband, two children, three dogs, five cats and fourteen mango trees.