

POETRY | FALL 2016

Berry Picking

By Sara Adler

I'm concerned about blueberries,

about global warming frost that nips

spring buds, the water underground

spreading its dioxin fingers into wells.

I'm concerned about blueberries,

and chickadees that twitch and flit

through the Dexter farm, the plink

of berries into bottom of plastic pail.

On the dirt road there, a raccoon's bloated body

was a micro-climate, a gathering front of flies,

storm of buzzing cloud.

I'm concerned about blueberries

as sun spills its light onto the back

of my toddler's neck, grime of sunscreen

smeared into creases of dimpled arms.

“Don't eat those, yet! Let's wait

until we're home to wash them.”

Wash away the spray,

wash away

the danger.

But the purple juice

drips

down her chin, the light tousles her hair

and cranes fly overhead

to fields we cannot see.

I'm concerned about blueberries,

concerned about the sun

the young mother, the grandfather,

the man about to marry

that I comfort in the hospital. A sunspot on skin,

a blink of an eye, lungs clotted with tumors.

I'm concerned about the blueberries

and plunge them into the safety

of water, streaming

curative and cold

from my faucet.

Sara O'Donnell Adler is a rabbi and serves as a hospital chaplain at the University of Michigan Health System. Her poetry has appeared in Poetica Magazine, The Bear River Review, and is forthcoming in The Broadkill Review. She lives with her family in Ann Arbor, MI, where even the birds in the backyard wear the colors maize and blue.

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