

## Cinderella

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CINDERELLA

1.

Oh, more color of violets they propose to carry, my sisters  
Paint their lips, hipbones adjusting to the latitude of any Prince.  
I, only I hide like a star at dawn, tending pumpkins in our manor  
Garden. Tomatoes speak in red breaths, pedestals of Brussels  
Sprouts raise their green scepters. In a laden plot, no slipper  
Supports my gardening efforts. My feet sweat into my boots.

2.

The dainty toes of Queens do not fit the girth of boots.  
My own toes flatten in their corral of stinking leather  
As my sisters, with their velvet countenance, remain  
In slippers. I stoke the dinner fire, sew an apple in the mouth  
Of a pig, a fat, goodly Prince. I would measure alterations  
To place him on a pedestal if not for all the conversations  
Rolling about the kitchen like pumpkins.

3.

The Prince's Ball nears the harvest of my pumpkins.  
A festival, halls glitter-scuffed from golden boots.  
The Prince announced himself a groom-to-be, his pedestal  
Sitting empty as a new moon. Step-Mom goaded my sisters  
To accept his challenge the way summer accepts fall.  
You cannot argue a Prince's fate, what with his coming-out ball  
And how he spoke soft as a slipper gliding on ice.

4.

Coronations weight my gut. I cannot choose a slipper  
To accessorize even common threads. And I can make  
My own decisions. I have no time to be picked by a Prince.

I clean the hairs from Step-Mom's brush, resole my work boots  
With tarry sticks. Yes, with breasts dangling like participles,  
My sisters attain a design that fits best on any pedestal.

5.

But I claim talents, too. I can decipher the tune of birds  
Perched on pedestals of branch, twittering the Ball news  
With their slippery beaks quenched from garden berries.  
My sisters ignore their feathered lessons. You might as well  
Hitch rides to the ball in pumpkins for all their contentions.  
Becoming a princess is no different than lacing up your boots.  
One foot at a time, that's it. And who really needs a Prince?

6.

I'd rather be a meadow than one flower, a mountain  
Than one stone in a princely ring. During the ball,  
I tend my manor garden while my sisters seek their Prince.  
While they pirouette, I pick fat pumpkins to pile high  
On a grassy pedestal. I am not made for a glass slipper.  
Sorry, Prince Charming, but I'm keeping my boots.