



Poetry by

Shawna
Lemay

*All the
God-Sized
Fruit*

All the God-Sized Fruit

The Hugh MacLennan Poetry Series

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All the
God-Sized Fruit

SHAWNA LEMAY

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*for Rob
and for my parents*

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A THOUSAND WORDS

*... it is only in telling another's story
that one can see into oneself.*

– Sunetra Gupta

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Self-Portrait: Threads from an Art Forger's Diary

To experience beauty, truly
one must find one's heart.
Reach fingers delicately
through the space between ribs
as though they were venetian blinds.
Stroke the suspicious heart
the cold or green or unpractised heart
like the ears of a lost dog.
Who can say they have done this?

*

Some day i will think of Penelope
pull a thread, start the unravelling.
But for now i efface the lines of influence.
Bury them writhing deeply beneath snow.
If i have been enamoured
by the work of Vermeer's forger, Van Meegeren
who will know.
I paint until my hands and heart are not my own.
And then, the forgery.

It is the process with which you become obsessed.
Could Penelope have woven her endless tapestry
had she not loved the smell of wool
the sensation of dyed thread on her fingers?
Had she not loved working by candle light
watching the half-born figures, their incomplete
gestures
the way a scene drops around the ankles.
She had to have loved the unweaving
as well as the weaving.

*

The Spanish Forger.
Lovely labyrinth of 16th century panels and
manuscripts
forged in the 19th century.
A body of work by a single artist.
No, a skeleton. And lumps of clay.
The nicest thing being
no one knows if the Spanish Forger
was Spanish and not Dutch or French or Italian.
Or male or female.
There's the art.

*

Is there such a thing as self-effacement?