

David Cappella

Dead Persimmons

Abandoned, they hang, wretched miracles.
Three, each from a black, bare branch,
pecked out, skin drooped, crumpled miseries.
They've suffered flocks of amoral beaks.
Blackbirds, partakers of the of juicy innards,
of pulpy flesh spilled, have left them frozen
on a Frascati afternoon this Christmas Day.
No golden sun inside these left-over excuses
for fruit – shrunken, gutted peels – dead *cachi*.

Gazing at them I recall Li-Young- Lee's poem –
its images of this exotic fruit arose in me
like Venus rising from the sea: his father
painting the fruit in his blindness, evoking
their heft, the slow rub of each hand
on the fruit's skin, this tactile sense rendered
on the scroll. So sweet those two full fruits
must've tasted after he finished the painting.

Yet these three dead persimmons linger here,
left to suffer winter, a disfigured homage
to all that was once fecund, sweet, dazzling.
The pinkish glow of dusk on distant hills
spreads across the Latium fields of olive trees.
It's a delicate time, a time to balance
to ponder the ardent promises of poetry.

David Cappella is the co-author of two books on the teaching of poetry: *Teaching the Art of Poetry* (Routledge) and *A Surge of Language* (Heinemann). He won the 2006 Bright Hill Press Poetry Chapbook Award. His book *Gobbo: A Solitaire's Opera* will be published in Spring 2021 by Červená Barva Press and will be published as an Italian bilingual edition by *puntoacapo Editrice* in November 2021.