

from Juked #6, Spring 2009

MARY CROCKETT HILL

THIS IS THE WORLD

This is also the world.
A small boy drops
a maple leaf down a well.
A girl, slightly larger, does likewise –
peering over the stone lip to guess
the leaf's curled and wayward descent.

Across the yard, behind a stardust bush,
the housecat is toying with something still alive.
It flits through the grass, now here now there,
delighting the cat with its antic struggle for flight.

I am in the world too, wondering:
Do I kill the bird for mercy? Do I take it inside?
What would Dickon from *The Secret Garden* do?
The book-animals loved him so, showing their mildest
bellies beneath satisfied, glinting eyes.

I might think we all want such love,
even from a half-dead bird – except
my brother was once chased down a walking trail
by a man who'd just killed his first turkey
and to celebrate, downed three six-packs
and started firing at hikers. He hounded after
my brother, hollering for all the world
like Yosemite Sam, "I'm gonna get you, I'll get you!"

The man later told the police, "It seemed at the time
like the thing to do."

This is the world, and where we spit,
where we stomp, where we fuck and crap,
and all that Jack built, and whatever's next,
and whether we forgive our father
or trust strangers or take zoloft,
and why the trees on one side of the hill
bud green before the others,
and if we make our way to Egypt,
and who there holds a broom, and who a gun,
and once we finally lie down at the end of the day
on our mattress or hammock or stone slab,
how the moon just keeps throbbing
so we sense loss too keenly,
and what finally *is* the thing to do—
 and if we carry our children
 inside our own bodies, and where
 we plant our pumpkin seeds,
and why we fear caves
and dark
 underwater places,
the dark under water,
the dark
 — someone please stop me,
I could go on forever, it is
after all, the world.