

SUSAN FROMBERG SCHAEFFER

Dream: The Oranges

The dream was full of oranges
Which burned so brightly in the trees
They seemed to have burned through

From deep beneath some other sky.
The foliage was green and lush.
Ebony and brown were the monkeys

And their white teeth startled
With the blinding glare of skulls.
Nevertheless,

Out of the thick ferns
A lizard struggled up

And cast his shadow on a rock,
And cast it in the shadow-shape of man,
Small and wriggling and brown,

And the lizard saw the shadow
And was insulted, and went back down.

Tricks of light the oranges play,
So the lizard said.
He knew there were no such things as men,

And the man, who saw it all,
As the storm winds rose
And the red leaves

Leaped from the trees like flames,
Agreed it was a trick
And stood before the huge orange of the sun

And cast no shadow.
Yet the shadow of his wife
Flickered on the rock before him

And the shadow of her trailing veil,
Rising in the wind,
And the shadow of his child,

And the wind blew them off.
And blew hundreds of oranges down
So that he seemed to stand knee-deep

In the sun hatchery of the galaxies.
And the sun said,
All that you should do

You should do at night,
A wedding in the park,
The bride in moonlight,

The bride's gown blue,
The flower girl,
All giving births at night,

All medicines at night for each sick child
All dying should be done at night
For the eye of the sun is a mean eye

It burns what it sees
Your shadow is black ash
And it will burn that

Again if it can
It is a restless eye
It sees nothing twice,

And as it spoke,
The sun balanced on the horizon's edge,
And one by one,

The dark trees silhouetted there
Took fire and the fire spread
And the man saw his shadow rise

Like a bright ash in the hot fire's air
And the voice of the lizard, accusing him,
And the world

Came to an end.