

## JESUS CRAWLED

After the accident, our parish halls grew swollen. I weaned  
lambs from the pale soap that cascaded down  
their mothers' swollen udders. My  
fingers parted their begging mouths. I shook confetti  
from their hooves in the webbed mesh  
of night. My mother held the bulbs of  
her crimson amaryllis and summoned  
the lunar new year from its green  
nirvana. That night I spoke to tulips. That  
night I smoked and smoked; tobacco leaves  
grew fur and I shined a light in their yawning  
mouths. Jesus wore a halo. It had never rained  
so gently. Jesus crawled below the surface  
of a claw-foot tub, among imagined gardens  
of aloe and jade. Children inundated the  
square and their faces ticked with the pleading  
rhythm of a cat's tongue. I drank tears from soup. I drank  
and drank as the last drop sunk inside itself.

## THE SOUL'S MANSION

Leo Tolstoy appeared in the pixie ring, sucking both thumbs and fingering through the wispy, derelict hairs of his beard. His raven kept its eye on me. He spoke in the northern dialect and the valley flooded with flowers as delicate as the tips of succulent chives. One appeared in his mouth. A bullion cube of froth breasted the mountain range and bore down on us. At dusk the shrouded world was reformed.

Bricks became the ochre legs of mushrooms. His Russian hands converted to water and sizzled. They were shards of ice on the rococo magma of a soul's mansion. His eyeteeth became knives in the hands of an ancient juggler. His tongue was a sword in the mouth of a dying rat. The blade of sound separated from shrouded turquoise crystals in the hollow of his chest.

He stands alone on the world's thatching, gracing us with scars and his tablecloth spreads over the softening Milky Way.