



On Earth As It Is

2011

After Eden

Tracey S. Rosenberg

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on earth as it is

prayer as story, story as prayer

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photo by Gwendolyn Joyce Mintz

After Eden

Tracey S. Rosenberg

Why are you laughing as you send me away? I'm not done.
There are fresh grasses I want to roll in,
buzzing fizzing fairies to chase like a spring kitten
(I promise to set them free, every last one).
When you let me come in, there was no one else you wanted.
Don't you remember how you asked me
to organise all the apples and stick them
onto the glorious new-tree growth? You said
no one else ever did it so precisely as me.
I wish I hadn't lost my grip
and crashed to the dirt.
(At least that amused you.)
I spent hours, even though you shook your head
and said again – nothing has to be done perfectly;
the job is done.

Let me back in, please, just a few
more minutes. I can tell you another joke,
one I've been saving. You'll double over, laugh
and cross your arms; I can make you happy I'm still here.
I'll watch every spider I find, so I can knit you
warm cravats from perfect spiderwebs.

I'll ignore the fairies if they distract me again. I'll scrub
the undersides of tree roots
or pick sluggish pustules off the leaves
till slime sucks under my nails –
I don't care how vile a task you set; I'll do it
if you need it done. I promise, I promise not
to mess up again.
There's always some little task to do

in a garden. You have an army of helpers now;
there has to be room for one more.

You couldn't have meant to send me away.
You're sad, for some reason.
You were wrong.

Please, I'm not done yet. I need to place apples
in infinite trees. If I fall again
I'll fall perfectly.

Tracey S. Rosenberg holds a New Writers Award from the Scottish Book Trust, and is working on her first collection of poetry, titled *Secondary*. Her debut novel *The Girl in the Bunker* (Cargo Publishing, 2011), which retells the story of Hitler's bunker from the perspective of Joseph Goebbels's twelve-year-old daughter, is a Scottish bestseller. Her vision of heaven involves the universal library, plenty of cats, and an endless supply of lemon poppy seed cake.

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