

*Mark Vogel*

**Gestation**

Beans, tomatoes, fruits, berries—catalogued—  
my name embossed in communicating ether—  
the merchants of trees, bushes, seeds  
crowd at the shoulder,  
coming from across the continent.  
They smell winter's desire for profusion.

The cold wind attacks the window,  
throwing sleet. In my warmth the world retreats  
into glossy forests of fruit and flower.  
In the dream matured apples grow fat and unblemished.  
A dawn redwood shoots eighty feet tall—  
complete with swamp and dinosaurs.

The catalogue descriptions are edible and rich—  
asparagus, horseradish, garlic,  
blueberries, currents—for sale and delivery—  
blue, red, yellow, pink, white—  
the possible billed as sure.

Blind to Blue Ridge truth  
the plants (soon enough) will arrive  
in messy March when winds still freeze the dirt  
and slugs still sleep in dens.  
When bare-root newcomers (wounded in the mail)  
are placed in the swirl, the catalogue glory  
(revisited) seems cynical alien language.

Somewhere bullheaded ground  
already grows a future. Somewhere May weeds  
stir (smiling) five feet tall.  
Here outsiders learn the hard way  
watching the children strangled by the rooted old.  
This ground doesn't wish to be tamed.

**New ears**

*Birds do it*

Ella Fitzgerald croons, letting in  
the big band beating heart.  
From long ago smiling dark night  
a gentle force says  
looming war can't kill  
the dance of just right attraction.  
Nothing matches a fresh open smile—  
Ella is vulnerable new skin  
swaying to fertile breeze—  
the morning innocence  
of new skin dancing  
to right steps.

Today smooth Ella is mine—  
nothing lost or needed.  
Though it took years  
she's here opening the day,  
singing brash  
erotic welcome.  
She speaks  
in proud alive air,  
all eyes following  
her shiny beauty.  
She can't be stopped—  
doing what she pleases.

*Bees do it.*