



2009

The Gardener's Knife

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Recommended Citation

Rivard, Catherine (2009) "The Gardener's Knife," *Cedarville Review*: Vol. 12 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cedarvillereview/vol12/iss1/3>

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The Gardener's Knife

On field's edge, watching autumn fall
Before the combine's teeth, filling wagons with living gold,
White plastic buckets wait as I climb, picking, tossing down the last
Treasures—grasp, twist, break the stem,
Or perhaps shake branches, duck beneath a rain of fruit
Descending to find most flawed—
Fly-spotted, bruised, ladybugs' decay,
Softened by encroaching frost, no
Grocery-store perfection, nothing
A bit of surgery can't redeem.
Yielding to my hand, knife-point flicking out rot,
A sanctified carving, knowledge of good
Hidden inside—sweet potential for pie or crisp, butter, jam,
Until the entire farm kitchen smells of sticky juice and steam
And I can finally rest, back aching, fingertips red, chapped,
An apple broken, now complete—wholly
Mine, and call it very good.