

Without the Sense of Touch

by Maren O. Michell

we judge wind by the angle of our hair.
 by the rhythm of trees, drift of hawk,
 destinations of clouds.
 Detect "too hot" from blisters.
 "too cold" from frost bite.
 Are slaves to thermometers:
 below 70, add clothes: above, remove clothes:
 know when to sow seeds, plant bulbs.
 Chocolate mint ice cream could be hot & brittle,
 stir fry, cold & smooth,
 lukewarm coffee as comforting
 as a steaming cup.
 As we bathe and swim we do not recall
 our kinship with water,
 our second skin.
 Indifferent to sex, conception occurs
 by appointment only,
 foreplay grows into a curiosity,
 its origins a myth.
 Hand-holding is keeping-track-of.
 Surrounding arms cause no melt down.
 With every step
 we injure ourselves. Civilization
 melds into its outskirts where leper-
 mystics enlighten
 with secrets to adaptation.
 Valued above sight, seeing-eye dogs
 are the new pet. Minus limbs
 and vision, our species whirlpools
 in on itself,
 and from the time before us
 the Garden of Eden begins to re-emerge.