

# Leda to the Neighbor's Girl

by Bianca Spriggs

He won't come at all  
the way you might expect,  
wearing formal dress  
blinding you with desire.

You won't even recognize him  
when you're barefoot  
in your garden tending  
to the rosemary and he falls  
dazzling as glassy quartz  
from a low-hanging cloud.

It'll be a simple thing,  
a flurry of feathers appearing  
to collapse in your arms.

You won't even have to think  
twice about wrapping  
your limbs around his.

Yours, like mine, bleeds.  
You think you'll be able to  
save him—and you'll try.

He'll descend white-hot at first, sudden,  
falling the way accidental taper wax  
or an incense ember flares  
when it meets your skin.

Before,  
I'd never given much  
thought to swans or any winged thing  
that wasn't born of paradise.

To me, even a serpent  
contains more sentience  
behind its eyes, or at least, intent,  
when it's set to strike.

And yet, there will be something  
of the god about him,  
some small stunning property  
leftover from the solar system  
even he won't be able to disguise.

By the end, when he promises  
to deliver your young himself  
from their golden eggs,  
to hang a constellation  
especially for the girlchild  
who favors him, you won't care.

You won't remember  
your husband.

You won't remember  
your name.

All you'll know—or will ever be  
content to know is the soft  
musk of covert feathers,  
the trembling prism light of dusk,  
the ever-widening concave,

the trumpet—

the ascent.