The Mennonite Squash

Leonore Wilson

The woman at the museum
showed us the Mennonite squash
she caressed it in her arms,
and the big white baby curled
as if swaddled.

We took her photo
before she cut it open,
and the yellow of school buses,
of yield signs, of cat eyes
burst forth, the sun—
the mother of suns.

And the earth—
seeds fell like new pilgrims,
seeds reaped in autumn,
the fullness of autumn,
and we fried the squash in rings—
rings like Saturn.

Squash tasting of soft lustful
things, of moisture and soil,
of kindness, of what the museum
held, meaning the history
of travelers, of wildflowers, honey,
and fennel, of barley and wheat,
ships and sailors, of the water
on the land and the land itself
of all that was good,
fruitful and multiplied.

Picking Olives

Mother let the olives
fall, the black pearls

with their nutlet seeds.

She sang to them
among the chickadees,

as the pipe-thin
boughs let down

their leaves

like skiffs touching scuds
and krill.

How she sang
in the morning canyon

over the history of clay

and to the stream that tippled
down as if

the earth
were a cradle.

She sang for creation,
as if she were Eve

making fire
with hands and feet circling.

And how the little galaxies
swelled

one, two, three…
into the pail's curvature,

unchronicled and ancient.



Leonore Wilson is a college English and creative writing teacher from Northern California. She is on the MFA Board at St Mary's College of California. Her poetry books are *Western Solstice* (Hireath Press) and *Tremendum, Augustum* (Kelsey Press). Leonore's work has been published in The *Iowa Review*, *UnrulyCatholic Women Writers*, *Trivia: Voices of Feminism*, *Third Coast*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Quarterly West*, *Upstreet, Madison Review*, *Laurel Review*, *Pif*, etc.

Her historic cattle ranch and family home in Napa Valley were recently destroyed in the LNU fire.