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Cover:  
Detail of Daphne from  
Bernini's 'Apollo and Daphne'

**Origami Poems Project™**

## Deft Turning

Ira Schaeffer © 2013



## Deft Turning



Ira Schaeffer

### Upside-Down Cake

Then with quilted mitts  
you managed a deft overturning—  
my hunger and dread now rested  
on a glass pedestal,  
a dainty dish sweeter for its rarity—  
Mother, you fed me lies;  
you fed me love.

Mother Mayhem, Queen of Hearts  
remember how you bound  
your pal, your son  
tighter than the Gordian knot  
with welts and kisses—your embrace  
a coil of vipers, a tickling hysteria.

When your cruelty was spent  
you'd lure me back  
with baking pans and pineapple slices,  
framing your eyes like golden spectacles  
then holding them up to mine—I saw  
the one I loved return.

The Jolly Baker laughed, the eggs cracked,  
sweet dust powdered your pretty hair—  
I watched the mixing blades spin—  
without your centrifugal loathing  
our topsy-turvy world inverted  
as the batter thickened.

### Again the earth thaws

### Primavera

Again the earth thaws and one bony knuckle  
then the next unfurls  
until your fingers fan out  
caressed by the tender air.  
Soon the green feels its way back,  
fleshing out the beauty of you  
shaking bits of soil free  
from your strands of yellow,  
thickening with each new breath.

All winter long my brittle bed  
pierced me with loneliness;  
my graying body starved in long neglect  
ached for the color of you.  
Even as the press of snow chilled my heart  
I wanted to believe our love  
could outlast death.

Daphne of the glittering green, now rooted  
near the river house, your father's  
gift and his sorrow, as he watched your lithe,  
quick body twist and grow brittle,  
the blue ribbons in your flowing hair  
hang limp from your slender branches.

Tell me how you live without  
the burning of your smooth limbs,  
the fire in your hidden parts.

Are those evergreen leaves your bloodless  
laurel, those chaste blooms the garland  
that choked Apollo's desire?

I need to know how you live  
without passion and tenderness.  
Are the birds that perch and sing,  
the wind that strums each part  
enough, or do they mask your weeping?

### Metamorphosis