

Passport 1972

I still taste the tang of cheese between crusts,
See the flash of blue lake water,
Sausage stands with orange awnings,
The pensioners in their gardens, sunning,
Cows tearing at the grass, the crush
Of wool coats and luggage on the platform.
Whenever I board that tall train in my mind,
Clutching my ticket stub smelling like bacon
From the tall conductor's fingers,
Eagerly watching another train passing—
Leathery faces peer out windows,
Whisper,
Come with us, the world is this way—

That dark-olive carriage in late-April,
Horse-hair in the seats and sweet tobacco,
The aroma of railroad, oiled, Swiss,
The under-carriage rocking, slow at first,
Side-to-side, then builds to a hurtle,
And I'm off—sailing through sunlight
Toward the frontier crossing.
I hear the music of the iron grating,
Feel a shuddering acceleration—
I turn sixteen on this train—
My brain changes,
Adding an engine, all rumble and jerk,
Two-storied windows, exuberant bells,
Turning sixteen— one girl gone, another
Switching places at the crossing.

April Kestrel

I dive into air.
A kestrel soars alongside.
The day is all mother-of-pearl and ripples.
Why do I feel so
for this bird, his
curve ball world
of vaster space and
intimate gravity?
I'm just a body unlearning itself,
one leap, weightless—
and the axis of the world
tips her wings.

Pre-dawn bird song, sweet
sound of trains passing—
loving you unreasonably
I ask if you'll come
live in the flower awhile
you say, um, yes, um
Ridge after ridge of petals—
where hands fall naturally,
frivolous flower!
Kneeling in the dirt
planting dwarf bearded iris—
she straightens her back
Snow slides off the roof—
three times sparrow peeps, peep, peep
winter is over

April Kestrel



Mary Ann Mayer

April Haiku

They all want Spring-time—
it's the beginning of scent,
of violets on shoes

Jonquils want to play—
but how? Crammed into a vase
they can't unruffle

Beside the swift stream—
flutter of girls and laughter
and one still dancing

Storm clouds push down
crocuses push up, a poem comes
mud floats down river

To the hollow tree
snow melting overnight —
I talk about you

Crossing the spring stream
swollen with rain and tadpoles,
sandals in my hand

Deep purple petals—
bright yellow eyes at the heart,
passersby look kind

My friend runs to me
babbling, strewing flowers
April idiot

Beside black water
we stand with our bicycles
in white blossom rain

Spring dusk. Wanting more—
robins, cardinals, tanagers,
ruby-throated words

Please recycle to a friend.

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Cover picture of American kestrel

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April Kestrel
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