

The New Criterion

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Apple bough

by Rachel Hadas

A loaded apple bough
brushes against a partly opened window.
It is as if the branch weighed down with fruit
were emerging from the window,
as if the house's fingers
like Daphne's fingers in Bernini's sculpture,
were reaching out and turning into branches.
A man in the room is advancing toward the window:
his room, wall, window, house,
his apple tree, not mine.
We on the outside—are we interlopers,
I and my band of friends,
I and my beloved?
Why do I so desire to pick these apples?
For whom? They aren't mine; I do not even
want them for myself. They are to give,
this rosy fruit, these pentacles, these pawn-
broker's gold globes, or Sappho's bridal apple
twinkling on a high branch out of reach.

Rachel Hadas's new book of poems, *Love and Dread* (Measure), will be published this spring.

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