
June 2014

Military Ball

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Recommended Citation

Kutz-Marks, Marie (2014) "Military Ball," *The Laureate*: Vol. 8 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate/vol8/iss1/17>

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MILITARY BALL

Marie Kutz-Marks

33

You are here in autumn's ascent—
in the stripping of the oak limbs,
trunk ribboned with a jaundice bow.
No remedy for the distance, we are leafless
fingers feeling for a shared psalm.

The snow is sure to follow, to fall, oh—
you know I'd take you were you wholly here,

you know I'd steal you were you free and holy.

You propose—the requisite for the malady,
hoping I'll waltz to the melody of sparkled hands,
severed but sweet, bleeding but bound.

I do
dance, digesting pity,
to the songs of eager swallows
when spring chides me with its plethora of births.

I do
dance, falling sparsely,
to the songs of patient sparrows
as even the dying leaves outcolor me.

There is no end to this procession—
the cadence of rank and years,
the wars of men in dazzling uniform
with pregnant wives in crisp white gloves
who so softly announce and omit the seasons.