

Katherine L. Hester

Cucumbers

Hand-over-hand, starry blooms
climb the rigging of fence,
toward the echo of themselves
that exists in the invisible stars
that pepper the bright blue bowl
of the sky.

Inside, I sit back on my heels, silenced by
the Jacob's ladder of vertebrae
in your back
as you twist over your head
the hand-me-down shirt.

These are the dog-days, the doldrums; here in the city, heat
handles the pavement.
The day inhales, exhales; blue sky bulks
into clouds, becomes
showers.

In the backyard,
tendrils of cucumber
climb the rigging
of fence, each
bulge behind the blossoms
become ballast. By afternoon,
the morning's flowers
will be fruit.
Will perform their
clever, botanical slight of hand,
turning
water that falls from the sky
into seed and pulp,
flesh beaded with condensation.

Tonight you will reach
for the pale disks of cucumber
on the plate. Every circle
includes
its own ghostly, starred symmetry,
the seeds' arrangement echoes
the shape of the blossom,
the shape of the sky, the morning sun,
the afternoon rain, the hand
that hovers over the plate.