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Eros in the Orchard

John Stevens Barry

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Fireworks

People in a field with light and noise
Startle the dark, and savage boys
Scrabble among tall legs for rocket sticks.
Showers of the pyrotechnics
Wink in smoke, trailing a storm
Above the trees, against the warm
Moon. Burnt powder and burnt hay.
A railroad flare makes hellish day
On scattered faces. Sparklers in the gloom,
Like candles in an attic room,
Wander in ghostly conclave. It's the Fourth.
Aurora borealis from the north
Moves down above the field and thunders
Finale. The sky shuts up those fiery wonders,
And heals without a sign of scars.
The old and slow explosion of the stars.

—Ernest Kroll

Eros in the Orchard

The plums, red spheres against the naked sky,
Shake in the broken heat like rising fire;
The orchard shudders, as the wind comes high.

I come not quickly down in golden rain
When the plum tree is black against the sky
But leap forth, brute, from deep within the brain

And fade, not as seducer nor as sin,
But mindless sense, and as with golden rain
The air is sweeter where a god has been.

—John Stevens Berry