

The Truth About Why I Love Potatoes

For Sarah Apt

1.

Of everything you get for dinner
they're the most fun to play with:
gravy lakes soaking deep into the soft white Alps
of the mashed ones; French fries good for fences
to keep your fork safe from Lima beans;
the baked ones perfect for pounding down
into pancakes from the moon.

2.

I guess I forgot to mention how much I used to love
globbing mashed potato into a ball then hurling it
at my brother so it seemed he was the one
who had made the mess. Now grownups
do the same thing, too, but usually not with potatoes.

3.

If a potato were able to turn into a person,
I'm almost certain it would be someone you'd like
for a friend. It could teach you to understand
the language of animals who live underground:
worms and woodchucks, foxes and bears.
On rainy Saturday afternoons, it would take you
to funny movies. When you were feeling sad,
it would remind you of the good things
you'd forgotten about yourself.

4.

There might be dozens, even more, in the garden,
without you ever knowing, fat moons blooming
a secret night sky right under your feet.

5.

If I could have my wish, I'd want my poem
to be just like a potato. Not afraid of the dark.
Simple and surprising at the same time.
You'd have to dig a little to get it but then
you'd be glad you made the effort. And maybe
after you were finished, something in you
that had been hungry for a long time
wouldn't feel so empty anymore.

By Makeel McBride

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

By Wallace Stevens

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a tree

In which there are three blackbirds.

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

IV

A man and a woman
Are one.

A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

V

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

VI

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.

The mood

Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

VII

O thin men of Haddam,

Why do you imagine golden birds?

Do you not see how the blackbird

Walks around the feet

Of the women about you?

VIII

I know noble accents

And lucid, inescapable rhythms;

But I know, too,

That the blackbird is involved

In what I know.

IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,

It marked the edge

Of one of many circles.

X

At the sight of blackbirds

Flying in a green light,

Even the bawds of euphony

Would cry out sharply.

XI

He rode over Connecticut

In a glass coach.

Once, a fear pierced him,

In that he mistook

The shadow of his equipage

For blackbirds.

XII

The river is moving.

The blackbird must be flying.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.

It was snowing

And it was going to snow.

The blackbird sat

In the cedar-limbs.