

Cake

by John Riley

The girl's hand is pressed against the tree. It's early summer
and her skin is still white with winter. Her boyfriend stands beside
her.

Both are laughing, their teeth two rows of washed shells
in the watermelon-stained sunset. There is the scent
of lighter fluid and meat and now at last I reach the memory
of cake between his lips, and how he wanted it, and wants it still,
standing beside the fire-escape, where birds lift
into the alley air.

