

Denmark (or On the Death of John Updike)

by Yasmin Elaine Waring

I was only twelve when Johnny Updike had his way with me.
Reading *Couples* secretly,
piano lessons through,
even then I knew

Denmark was rotting in the pocket of Connecticut.

 Sifting through pretty decay,
I lay hands on the sticky thoughts of the academic prince
catch hold of his reason
peel its thick skin and carve bitter words:
buying black babies does not guarantee redemption.

 Much as he tries to bathe clean in white sand
he is still haunted by the slap of bare feet in the A&P
and the false promise of tight denim will, ultimately, undo him.

 Solace will not be rushed
but comes at last, extending its welcome
as he greets the poisoned tip.

2/2/11

