

Life of an organic tomato

Rod Drought

Scottsdale Community College

Honorable Mention, Poetry

green and tiny
hard as a nut on the backyard vine
ordinary, blemished days caused it to expand
like a heated bubble from a glassblower's tube
bloating in shape and color from the vine
until it was time to twist free

untamed and heavier than its perfect generic cousins,
lopsided and ribbed, misshapen scar brown and jagged
a pimple shaped like a devil's horn jutted from the top
small indentations like the folds of a fat belly creased the sides

more days maturing on my countertop
it gained density
inflating with muscle, meat, juice
until it reached the edge of decline

I carved it that night
it stubbornly held together until the end
from the velvet meat juice oozed in my mouth
warm and thick like reheated stew

I ate it alone
with olive oil and oregano
noting its imperfection sweeter,
wild, random growth richer,
than a faultless life
raised in a tethered world

for Matthew Parker