

Peter Waldor

Cayenne

A long time ago, in a moment  
of desperation, you placed a poultice  
of cayenne pepper over your clogged duct.

Thirty years later, I try every  
trick I can with the same breast.  
Sometimes we are perpendicular

like one hand at twelve and one at nine.  
Sometimes we kiss and don't make love  
and sometimes we make love

and don't kiss and sometimes  
we kiss and make love--  
you taught me this

last way is not always best.  
In pain, you forgot to wipe away  
the cayenne before nursing again.

That baby is near middle age now,  
loves spicy food more than anything  
and lives pretty close to home.

## Who Am I Really?

With great subtle fanfare,  
next to the trail,  
I moved a rock off a flower,  
a hare bell, which sprang back.  
I didn't look to see if you noticed  
because I wanted you to think  
it was all a natural part of me.  
I repeated the maneuver  
several times, each time I'd  
place the rock on another rock  
just off the trail, so it wouldn't be  
kicked onto another flower,  
and I positioned it so any lichens  
on either rock wouldn't be covered.  
Feeling guilty about my designs,  
I thought I should give you a fuller  
picture so I told you about  
my book of horror movie sketches,  
full of slow dismemberments,  
unanesthetized surgeries and all  
manner of rusty piercings.  
You just shrugged about the horrors,  
even telling me your daughter,  
with her partner, drive hooks  
through their flesh,  
at least a dozen and then they  
thread the hooks and hoist  
each other into the air.  
She is Navajo and there is  
a Lakota practice with similar actions.  
She lives happily in the suburbs  
and they do their suspensions  
with humor, concentration and tenderness.