

# Stockholm

Ashley Dunn

the hills were brown  
when she started dancing.  
raw, supple skin swollen from  
a violent push of life and  
chafing at every crease.  
and though she cried for mother,  
the giant mountains looked upon her,  
swallowing the agonizing sounds.

they were a blind and faithful council.

rivers tumbled through the valleys,  
carving the earth so ferociously  
but kissing sweetly the toes of the girl  
as she learned to tumble with them.

[little did she know  
their intimate embrace  
would serve as seeds  
and render her Persephone]

innocence soon withered  
like the summer sun,  
and on her lips  
she cried out again as roots  
stretched from her toes  
and chained her to the giants  
while violent winds wrung her fingers dry.

a blind and faithful council,  
[but they could not squeeze out the years.]

[but they could not squeeze out the years.]

sometimes she sat in the shadow of the beasts,  
imagining she could grow flowers  
in the steele that bloomed from her heel  
or peel back her toenail  
and see the poison of time seep from the wound.

the hills would let it soak into every  
pore of dirt and bleed from  
stock to tree branch  
until she withered dry and  
the evening sun kissed  
the salt left to linger on her lips

as though Delphi herself had  
spoken the words  
the girl was sure she belonged to the hills  
top hats dusted in snow  
and ferns of a dusty green  
wrung around their necks