

## Digging Up Persephone

By Mags Webster

When I pulled you from Earth  
you were sticky with worm casts,  
your torso a brindle of glistening trails,  
a map glazed by mourning. You tried  
to cover yourself with your hand,  
with your hair, but Death had made  
you beautiful – you did not need to hide.  
You lifted your head, and you smiled at me,  
your mouth placental with pomegranate seeds,  
a spatter of shrapnel torn from the fruit,  
and I kissed your brow, as I always do  
at this time of year. Once, you would clamber  
up through the clay, but this time I had to  
exhume you. Your surrogate, Earth,  
would not give you up, she wanted your body  
to stay underground, and though I am jealous  
I understand why. Up here the seasons  
are fevered and harsh, the air holds close  
its embargo of rain. This world is no place  
for a daughter of mine. Yet each dearth  
you conquer, your white arms outstretched.  
You have no need of a mother, a mid-wife.  
You force yourself up from the womb  
of the grave: a lady who rises, red hair ablaze.