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Two Poems

Greg Hobbs

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Mangling the Fruit

*Greg Hobbs**

It's not like peeling a fresh carrot
in long and easy slices
with a specialized instrument,
or separating a garlic bulb
into multiple cloves
with your thumbs,
each perfect and ready for
pot roast and greens, family
dinner and onions.

It's more like a pot luck in a fruit tray, everybody
invited. You may choose the more astringent,
the acid - the passion fruits, grapefruits,
limes and lemons - while your neighbor
or other citizen stranger savors peaches
or those sweet bing cherries far
different from those native sour prairie
types. All may vote according
to taste, and change their tastes.

But consider handing over the table of
The First Amendment to the highest
bidder. It's not unlike peeling persimmons
with five sets of fingernails tearing the flesh
of the fruit for patches of skin.

* Gregory Hobbs is a Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court.

Westering

Greg Hobbs

At the jowls of cliffs
where the river meets the sea,
surf throws punches

At the mouth, within their lips
a lake of estuarine waters suspended,
tastes both fresh and brine.

Buoy on the eastern shore
marks a spit of rocks,
splits Phoenician barques

Splinters Roman oars beneath
a pinnacle light tossed fishermen
yearn to see at night.

Their hearths, their wives running
through the splattering storm.

At the prow of the orange-tiled town a stony
shut-up castle brown, like a bruised and
swollen fist, hammers against the

Moorish blue and blazing whites framed
in doorways of a Portuguese sky, a speckled
beach, fair and clean of body.

Its wooden sunning deck,
shuttered down for the season,
less at home than a strutting gull

Scattering crabs, we carry bags
of breakfast rolls, sweaters slung
about our shoulders.

The four of us, the winter solstice,
we have quarreled ourselves here.

I am bent at the middle
from clutching the steering wheel
too tightly

Only three of us will eat,
her mother, her brother, me,
she will have nothing but salad.

Then pushes all the leaves
and raisins on her paper plate aside,
creating vacant spaces

A harsh and wordless walk,
a sacrificial knife of shadows cast,
could cut each of our hearts out.

Like grains of pulverized rock searching for
a firmer headland, we stammer ahead.

On such a day as this, Celts and Inca
sought a certain aperture through
which a sure and steady beam

Might reappear, with fingers tipped in red
vegetable dye ancestral Puebloans
would mark the exact spot.

Spheres align the hemispheres and
drink from double-fired mugs, glazed,
painted, passed from

Mother, father, daughter, son,
sing and celebrate the turning back,
the quickening.

Within a wildly spinning orb our wounded
shorebird, she limps along, a stifled song.

Vila Nova de Milfontes, Portugal (12/ 21/1990)
