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The Mowers: Les Faucheurs

Judy Cochran
Denison University

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The Mowers

I'm looking at the intersection
of thigh and cloth,
 oh at you,
where, caught in sunlight,
fabric adorns you.

Muscles shifting
 beneath skin, tendons
 maxed out at their task
you're only scything the field's fallow grass

down to stubble
 but I grow my fingernails long
 so they may graze you
and I paint them pink
 to glow against your tan

thigh to kneecap
 to the calf's demarcation.
 Who knows why
we love each other this way?
Your shout of laughter,

it arcs to me
 across the hillside
 where I weed away chicory,
other riffs of green
 and the stinging

nettle, its rosary of pain.
I press against my palm
 and cross over to you,
bearing a stigmata,
red's rising tide.

Les Faucheurs

Je fixe l'angle où ta cuisse
rencontre ton blue-jean,
 je te contemple,
là où, pris de soleil,
la toile délavée te célèbre.

Muscles roulant
 sous la peau, tendons
 saillant sous la besogne
tu ne fais que faucher l'herbe de la jachère

à son chaume
 mais je laisse pousser mes ongles
 pour qu'ils te tondent
et je les peins en rose
ils brillent sur ta peau baisée par le soleil

de la cuisse au genou
 à la frontière du mollet.
 Qui saura pourquoi
nous nous aimons ainsi ?
Ton rire trace

sa courbe
 par-delà la colline
 où je cueille des brins de chicorée,
d'autres phrasés verts
et la piquante

ortie, rosarie de douleur.
Je l'étreins dans ma paume
 et viens vers toi,
marquée du stigmate,
rouge marée montante.

Ann Townsend

Translated by Judy Cochran