

*Published in Marsh Hawk Press Review, Spring, 2019*

David Epstein

*Fairy Tale*

The gardening is over now:  
The beanstalk's in the clouds.

On the long climb

You stop to issue instructions  
about should your untimely demise occur.

I stop to look at your face, at the huge blue  
Iris, pupils down to points in the high sun

I am thinking your entire childhood is in those eyes,  
In how you look at me so hard and make it clear:

If we were married, there would be cake  
Every day. We enter the giant's castle.

The climb back down: you trying to muffle the magic  
Harp, me shushing the goose.

Three days later you confess you're not sleeping well;  
The harp never stops noising, even shut up inside a trunk.

Me neither, I say. That goose honks at odd hours,  
and anyway, the golden eggs are starting to be a storage issue.

Having cut down the beanstalk,  
There's no returning these things.

You say What have we done?  
I shrug and say Everyone knows giants

Eat children. Childhood, you say, IS giant.  
There's no therapy for this. We stole.

We try beanstalks and fertilize them.  
We try midnight incantations over bean sprouts.

That old woman is never in the market.  
What to do with all these eggs, this music?