

Olives

by Len Krisak (April 2016)

Sometimes a yearning for surrender comes—

A hunger for defeat

That's pleased with crumbs

And longs for bitter crow to eat.

Sometimes that appetite goes unappeased

By pie, however humble.

Sometimes it's eased

A bit, but then we cave and crumble,

Craving humiliation fit to swallow,

Starving for abasement

We pray will follow

The giving in to our effacement.

Then comes the day that always comes, when we

Have gulped down all we will.

Then we shall see:

If we have truly had our fill

Of ceding everything, each precious bit

That made us what we are;

If this is it;

If all our yielding's gone too far,

And we have lost that craven appetite

And now will take no more,

But stand and fight

The terrible, the needful, war.

Len Krisak has published in *The London Magazine*, *The Oxonian Review*, *PN Review*, *Standpoint*, *Agni*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Dark Horse*, *Agenda*, *The Hopkins Review*, *Commonweal*, *Literary Imagination*, *The Oxford Book of Poems on Classical Mythology*, and others. His latest book is *Virgil's Eclogues*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Forthcoming: *The Carmina of Catullus*, Carcanet Press, 2015, *Afterimage*, Measure Press, 2014, *Rilke: New Poems*, Boydell & Brewer, 2015 and *Ovid: The Amores and The Ars Amatoria*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

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