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Tanna By October

I've marked a favorite verse with cotton tissue.
It's late October. Uncarved pumpkins pock
the neighbors' yards with color as they issue
their orange circumstances down the block.

I'm thinking of you, Tanna — (do you guess?) —
of how they gave your body to the ground
the day my daughter came, and that blue dress
in which your tiny, full-formed bones were drowned.

Three weeks from yesterday, if you could live,
we'd kiss your cheek, and call you thirty-seven —
four years my elder, but diminutive
and meek as straw against a white-hot Heaven.

In dreams enclosed by cloudy, silver wraps,
I held the baby boy you left behind.
He was no trouble to me. Slumber saps
most injured senses from the human mind.

Jennifer Reeser

Remembering Tver

It's in captivity I languish,
and death is what I ask from God,
but I remember, into anguish,
Tver's bare, emaciated sod,

the well with its decrepit crane,
the cloudbanks frothing overhead,
and in the field, a creaking gate,
exhaustion, and the smell of bread,

along with that obscure expanse
where even the voice of the wind is slight,
and also, the condemning glance
of each calm, sunburned peasant wife.

Anna Akhmatova
translated by Jennifer Reeser

Jennifer Reeser's poems, translations, criticism and fiction have appeared or are scheduled to appear in such print journals as *Louisiana Literature*, *Blue Unicorn*, *The Raintown Review*, *PIVOT*, and *The New Laurel Review*, as well as being archived at the online *Alsop Review*, *Able Muse*, and *Expansive Poetry & Music Online*. Her poems have received a nomination for the Pushcart Prize, and the 2000 Innovative Form Award from The World Order of Narrative and Formalist Poets. She is the assistant editor for the print journal *Iambs & Trochees*. Her book *An Alabaster Flask* is the winner of the 2002 Word Press First Book Prize, and will be published by Word Press in the spring of 2003.