

Carl Lindner

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Out of the split
seed
green uncoiled
like a navel-string.
Tendrils-fingers
closed on everything.
Green curiosity
hungry
to touch, to hold,
it clutched
the grass in little tufts.
Like a spell, it wove
among tree-roots
black-damp —
subway trains
leaving
a tunnel
only to enter
another.
That green vine
took me for a ride.
First light I
ran out white
feet wet to see
how far it had gone
in dark, where
was it going, what
was it climbing now.
In seven days
it spiralled round
a fir, wrapping it
like a present. Christmas
in July. I counted
every swelling
blossom, every opening.

Goldenrod,
the mouths were poems
singing to
a budding boy
who wondered
if the vine would reach
the top,
cling to air —
climbing the invisible
trellis to the sun —
or start
back down, knowing
it was running out
of room, out
of things to cling to,
or would it slow
itself to leave
its fruit
like bells
before the killing frost.

