

**Susan Bradley Smith**

## **Fresh Flora, or, Love, Like Other Improvements, Rarely Arrives in a Tank**

Lunch break: an exercise in innocence.  
You (seed pod?) arrive at my table with  
your long, slim, conical pod (spaceship?) of a  
strong-coffee colour and a tail like a fish hook  
belonging to a sinister fairy crowned by a blonde,  
dandelioned head to complete your punk aesthetic  
and sassy aeronautics. Taking your time, you spy  
someone else eating their lunch in a wide, open  
arch of campus green, and leave me. You land  
on their sandwich, you alien soldier of the plant  
world, sassiest of the sassy. And in your fleeting  
visit to us you say to your freshly fascinated  
disciples I am very busy. I have clear intent. I  
surrender to my fate. I am what I am what I am  
not is you. Then you take off on the invisible  
wind like a future Disneyland character, soon  
to save the world with your moral fortitude  
and superior engineering. Not to mention  
fashion sense. And there's idle me, watching  
this scene whilst talking an angry child down  
via phone, them thousands of miles away yet  
still ruining my composure. I am a stranger  
to such mindfulness as yours, and watching  
your floral flirtations, I lose my appetite,  
sure of being less than you. And when you  
fly away I am already missing you like you  
were my new best friend already turn-coated,  
and not just an interesting, unidentifiable  
seedy thing. You are so much better at all  
of this than me, I think, as I search for  
you in the unpatterned sky.