

Acrocorinth

Dimitra Harvey

You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed...

Psalm 128:2

Time has scalloped and tightly crimped
the hill's stone—all the troughs

and rifts of its flanks studded
with cypress, laurels. The Acrocorinth

juts into wind above the yellowed vineyards
and timber pig-sheds, the fish

like wands of garnet or black-spotted quartz
carving the shallows at Vrahati beach.

My grandfather's people
coaxed

clusters of bitter-and-sweet jade fruit
from the vines, while time—like a god's

hand on the hill—tapped off seams
of limestone with the rain's pick, or pounded out

trenches with fist-fulls of hail, lightning.
In the village, pines drip

resin in the brush. I walk
dirt tracks where hens pace for seed. In dusty

gardens, in olive groves, the goats swank
oily beards, the hammered scrolls

of horns, gnashing thyme thickets - the Acrocorinth
pale as whey to the south. From here

I make out the old acropolis extruding
from the hill like blunted teeth; I probe,

till my eyes ache, for Aphrodite's
temple, nesting somewhere in the high

ridges. The Corinthian Gulf flickers
down a north-east road, and I know

this evening the sun swill strut there like a peacock
trailing long feathers across

the water. Soon, I'll walk back
to my great uncle's house.

He'll empty wine from a barrel.
He'll tell me stories of his brother's fist.
I've seen the x-rays—my mother's
dented wrist, forearm—all the fractured

bones. And I'll think of those hands,
coaxing, on the vines; and I'll think of a god
with a fist-full of hail. I'll drink
the cool, bitter pink liquid, and currents

of sweetness will twist
through each mouthful.

