

Nance Van Winckel

Eat *This*

Target cake with a looming bull's eye.
Tiered cake with dancing girl inside.
Called up, put upon—sisters, can we
bring one? A consecrated cake of sand
that ticks like a clock. Can we bake it
and box it and get it there by dawn?
Cake of the coming Zeitgeist, cake
that inches palely toward the timer's
ding. Watch the cakes that follow caskets,
the ones that honor cretins and despots
Here comes the mink cake in its fox fur box;
there goes the one with a small fire inside,
the one with gilt letters rising at the edge
of blue frosting, and our favorite: soft
and moist with a baked-in steel file.
Soon we'll need companion cakes, cake
indices, and a boy to fan away the gnats.
Cakes atop cakes until we expire upon
our mountain of crumbs. God help us
cool on a rack, bask on a sill. Try this cake
with a meadow inside. God bless
a cake that goes forth as prime provision
for covert passage. God spare us
bakers. Let the cake's sweetness
beguile its eaters.

Missive

Impatient, alone in the sleek dark,
I chanted your name your name, thinking
soon, surely soon I'd be seized by you.
I'd be raised, opened . . .

I'd been a thing sent forth. Passing across
hands, through fingers and machines. Stamped.
Shipped downtown, flown around, honked at,
walked to a door, and slipped through a slot.

I had the patience of centuries. I waited—
for the door to fly inward, for the small wind
that would rush me forward to greet you
as you, buoyed by bright light, stepped toward me.