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Jean Bastien-Lepage: The Potato Gatherers

by David Veloz

The horizon is women: potatoes like stones
 surround their furskirts, folded as though they're shrouds
 and pillared about their legs—a canvas bone
 to gather on. Root rocks fill their bags the way clouds

fill the horizon, clouds they claw for and pick
 like daisies in an Easter time. The earth
 is mud, the sky is women, and here they wish
 with their mouths for clouds to kiss from the dirt

as they kiss up potatoes. Bending like women should bend
 in a garden, in love, with cherries and tulips and wine,
 they rain and gather clouds. Pouring to lend
 the idea they are gathering, gathering time

to kiss and bun their hair, and then planting
 to pick, to kiss to show they're not wanting.