

## To Shade a Green We Say a Noun

MOLLY TENENBAUM

Sea green, but which is that of the many greens of a sea?  
Green of sunglasses dyeing the world green,  
cheese-green as waves curl from the slicer.  
Spreadsheets of thin cirrus green, or foam green  
as the churned pee of asparagus eaters.  
Is glass green still green  
if speckled brown sand's at the bottom?  
Sea green as candlelight green,

and if I said forest green,  
would that be orange bracken green, blue  
birdback green, mosquito ink-leaks  
of green smashed green? Fir green's  
a black blot if the sky's still dark.

What if you haven't seen dollar green or a green gray pine?

Memory green's a pass by the mint bush.  
Elk River green is death green, and even  
opposite greens are green. Coal green, snow green,  
cherry cough syrup green. Green trouble  
afoot: Stay on the path. *Green gravel,*  
*green gravel, the grass is so green,* a lovely  
green refrain. *Green gravel, green gravel,*  
the world's green mind made singable green:

*Your true love is dead.* Crunchy brown  
is the trouble or the thing behind  
green is red.  
Painters failing green go for pink green,  
charcoal green, go grayscale, for dollops and skims  
hinting green. For forest, sieve and spear green.  
For skeleton leaf, green is filigree green,  
a word I tried once on the summer-camp counselor  
for Black Oak green, doily sky green,  
but really the sky was scissor green,  
and we were in stark egg-white green.

And then the green contraction of autumn.  
The winter of it, ivy of it never stops,  
this New Year's Day of my green  
resolution to speak in real green,  
dawn fog a cloth washed mud green.  
Waking up green on day two, green never  
the same as green. Let green say me,  
a gap in green. Green, speak, you blob  
I just made, spilled  
milk and sour grape green.  
You bonfire green, I'm piling on  
everything left in this house.

