

Guy J. Jackson

“Faludi’s Grief”

Say his name twice, it's fun: Faludi, Faludi. He had gone to grief, he had arrived at it, it had entered his living room and stood there lurking hunched. He would go down to the sporting goods store and purchase some sort of hitting instrument, preferably a baseball bat, but a cricket bat would do, a tennis racket sometimes. Then on to the vegetable stand, loading up on round or roundish fruits, you know the ones, say 'em along, oranges, tomatoes, kiwis, apples, the smaller melons, plums, peaches, maybe even pears if Faludi was feeling wild, if Faludi was thinking outside the sphere, eh? Then back to his living room where the grief stood waiting in the corner, not that the grief hadn't also been outside mocking the false love of the afternoon sun, but moreso in the quiet of the living room, and so there he went, Faludi, plucking the fruits from their carrier bags, tossing them into midair and whacking away with the bats or the racquets, and then the fury and hot tears would always ascend and apples would put fresh holes in the front window and fruit guts would strew the rugs and peaches and plums would explode away from their pits and then the pits would fly on to nick things and crack things and oranges would bounce behind the couch and join the moldering piles of their rotten brothers from grief battles of past weeks, yes sir the room stunk because swinging angrily away at grief was Faludi's only use for the living room this year and otherwise he kept it's door shut and a towel under the door. And if he ran out of fruit Faludi would beat whatever piece of sporting equipment to shards, smashing away at the walls, at the hearth, at the mantle, at the backs of chairs, going until his breath made raggedy noise choked from his throat, he would go until his cheeks and chin wore a shiny coat of tears and sweat. And for why? No, not because Faludi's grandmother had died, not because his father had died, not even because his best friend in all the world had died, no, Faludi had no grief for anything but the incident on bonfire day one summer ago, when Faludi had torched a pile of leaves and burned alive a cute and tiny hedgehog caught sleeping within.