

# The Orange

by Benjamin Rosenbaum

## An Orange ruled the world.

It was an unexpected thing,  
the temporary abdication of  
Heavenly Providence,  
entrusting the whole matter to a simple  
Orange.

The Orange, in a grove in Florida,  
humbly accepted the honor.

The other oranges,  
the birds,  
and the men in their tractors wept with joy;  
the tractors' motors rumbled  
hymns of praise.

Airplane pilots passing over would circle the grove and tell their passengers,

"Below us is the grove where the Orange who  
rules the world grows on a simple branch."

And the passengers would be silent with awe.

The governor of Florida declared every day a holiday.  
On summer afternoons the Dalai Lama  
would come to the grove and sit with the Orange,  
and talk about life.

When the time came for the Orange to be picked,  
none of the migrant workers would do it:

they went on strike.

The foremen wept.

The other oranges swore they would turn sour.

But the Orange who ruled the world said,

"No, my friends; it is time."

Finally a man from Chicago,  
with a heart as windy and cold as Lake Michigan in wintertime, was brought in.  
He put down his briefcase, climbed up on a ladder, and picked the Orange.

The birds were silent and the clouds had gone away.  
The Orange thanked the man from Chicago.

They say that when the Orange went through the national produce processing and  
distribution system, certain machines turned to gold,  
truck drivers had epiphanies,  
aging rural store managers called their estranged lesbian daughters on Wall Street  
And all was forgiven.

I bought the Orange who ruled the world

for 39 cents

at Safeway three days ago,  
and for three days he sat in my fruit basket

and was my teacher.

Today, he told me,

"it is time,"

and I ate him.

Now  
we are on  
our own  
again.