

## OUR HAPPY VOCATION

By Linda Rogers

In the beginning, it's so gentle we  
hardly notice. We are thrilled: by  
the scent of jasmine and mulberry  
leaves spun in the love extremities  
of insects with happy vocations, by  
those narcotic moments when the  
silk tightens around our necks, and  
the brain contracts like a womb.

There are so many guilty pleasures  
for a witness addicted to language,  
we sometimes forget the truth is a  
song often played on lethal strings.

We live for the frisson of male and  
female words: naked bodies tumbling  
in the corridor of bliss, sometimes  
failing to notice poets with bruised  
throats falling around us, their indelible  
blue hands staining its paper walls.

*We dip our fingers in the deeper wells.*

In Tehran they came like water, a  
green river of pilgrims, lassoing the  
minarets with nooses of light. Later  
they dispersed like wine, strangled by  
grief as the human river turned red.

*O Rubayat*, this is our happy vocation.  
Sex and death are as simple as words  
on a page, the reason we go there every  
time a story asks to be told, every time  
a prophet is blinded by angry gods.