

CHOOSING CHERRIES, 1940

(from the painting *The Cherry Tree, Le Cerisier*, by Balthus, 1940)

Antoinette chooses cherries from a tree
on a ladder. Balthus paints. The bushes bloom.
Waves of soldiers move toward *Gay Paris*.

The landscape here in Champrovent's a sea
of sickly green. The meadow gives a gloom.
Antoinette chooses cherries from a tree

amidst the shadow. The angle and degree
of filtered light reveal the season: June.
Waves of soldiers site on *Gay Paris*

to sweep the undesirable...debris...
He paints the heavens blue, the hillside hewn,
as Antoinette chooses cherries from a tree,

and moves the shadowed mountain—she'd agree
to add some light, some color, and some room.
Waves of soldiers circle *Gay Paris*;

the darkening twisted branches lean to lee,
although the wind has died. The sun sets soon.
Antoinette chooses cherries from a tree
while waves of soldiers enter *Gay Paris*.

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Published in *Ekphrasis, A Poetry Journal*, Volume 1, No. 5, Spring/Summer 1999.