

P O M A N D E R

First of all, hold in your hand
a ripe *Citrus sinensis*,
sweet orange (of the rue
family), a fruit Chinese
in origin, and now
tropical. Circle this
globe with a ribbon,
make a bow and loop:
in Andrew Marvell's words,
"He hangs in shades the orange bright, /
Like golden lamps in a green night."

The clove: *caryophyllus*
is its name, a tongue twister,
like the clove itself, which is
the blossom's bud, culled and dried.
In Edward Taylor's words:
"The Clove, when in its White-green'd blossoms shoots, /
Some Call the pleasantst sent the World doth show."

To make a pomander,
grasp the orange gently, and

stud it entirely with lines of cloves
so no rind shows. Leave it to age and dry
days and months, a smaller emblem
of itself; a paradox of
acid and balm combined, so the fragrance
—sweet-tempered, good-natured—
pervades the air, the rooms, cupboards, and linen:
long-lasting, fresh, citric, and yet delicate.

I WOULDN'T MOW THE FIELD

until the springs had frozen totally over,
say February when the last birds and bugs
had fledged and flown. When the joe-pye weed
seven feet tall from all its deep nutrition in the springs
had turned gray and powdery and gaunt. Until the meadowsweet,
which is a wildcat spirea, had given up. I wouldn't mow it until
the ice could bear the machine, until it wouldn't buckle under,
and the baleful loosestrife had gone to seed.

Two tiny native orchids, *Spiranthes lacera gracilis* and *Habenaria lacera*
(slender, and torn), grow in the shade
of all these tough and taller species. Minute
colonies of mosses surround these orchids,
you wouldn't know they were there
if you didn't know they were there.

The neighbor who yearly mows this field was once a member of
some elite and corporate power structure; now he deliberately
guides an internal combustion engine forward and back across
field after field after field, a happy man, spring-ridden.

H E A R T R A I N S

So *sault* means “jump,” as in
sauter in France, but not
in New France! In Old France
the *l* dropped out. In New,
they kept it: Sault Ste. Marie,
the leap, the rapids. But
in a linguistic roux, *Sault*
became *Soo*, reduced. Very
practical, actually, like
semaphores or an aquifer.

Why, clouds needing airfoils
ballooned up over the skiff
portage under the overpass
of the Soo Line and north to the
Soo-Dominion connector,
as sailors to the top.

They say *skip* because the ship rolls;
hear trains while asleep slipping into foul-weather gear,
hear trains while asleep.

B O N E G H A Z A L

There is a handsome wildflower/weed, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, bone-
set, which I worked my fingers to the bone

trying to transplant, without success. It bears white umbels—
umbrellas, really—and its blossom is the color of bone.

Alan Alda, they say, told a Columbia Physicians and Surgeons
commencement that “the headbone is connected to the heartbone.”

The brother of Napoleon, seated on the throne of Spain,
was painted by Francisco Goya: this was Joseph Bon-

aparte, they say. Glamour and privilege; in those circles
they dined on the delicate veal sauce and marrow-bone

flavor of osso buco. You wouldn't find this dish in the
town of Robinson's masterpiece *Housekeeping*, Fingerbone,

Idaho. Boneset was used in home remedies, teas to assuage
pain of ague, flu and colds, indigestion in the elderly, bone

fractures. (Boneset tea! Catlap!) Alan and Arlene Alda gave so much
to help the world of poetry, I think there isn't a mean bone

in the body of either one. Goya painted masterpieces
galore, despite a tumor on the legbone.

This ghazal celebrates distinguished figures
whom I wish I had the musical talent to praise with the trombone.