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Marigold I

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Marigold I

by John Van Rys

On a waxy stem, pale green,
speckled with rust spots,
perched on a bulbous seed pod
(in its third trimester—
hard and ribbed womb)
a marigold.

Soft-edged fan petals explode
outwards from a tight center,
petal backflips arching sky and earthward.
Indian-red edged with butter
yellow, each jostles
with her neighbor for sunning rights.
Underneath, lines in yellow touched by red
(emblems of pungency)
trace each petal's
break from green.

Mornings, when from my window
I watch you guard the garden, unlikely
knight rescuing peas and tomatoes,
your stinking cloud a shield,
your beautiful utility affronts me
pleasantly.