

Squeeze Me

Squeeze me like a tomato
until the red juice
oozes through your fingers
and seeds drip into your mouth
so you can taste I am garden fresh,
a real tomato.

Squeeze me like a tree
you hug with conviction,
allowing me to stand tall,
loving me for all my imperfections,
more even as I form new rings
and sport birds' nests in my hair.

Squeeze me like play dough,
acknowledging my grit,
my ability to bend without breaking,
but mold me
like Austen's Mr. Knightley did Emma,
for I can be naïve at fifty years young.

Squeeze me like a bicycle tire,
making sure I'm fully inflated with life
and I've tread enough to handle the road.
Then hop on, we'll travel,
trace the topography,
wear clear ponchos in the rain.

Squeeze me like a sardine, pack me close,
body to salty body,
like when we first
stuffed into a comfy chair at the bookstore,
then realized how near our faces were
and how it felt
so deliciously awkward.

Squeeze me like the atmosphere
hugs the earth,
letting in plenty of light,
giving me room to breathe
and forgiving me when

my chlorofluorocarbons blow holes
in your ozone layer.

And squeeze me like you want
to squeeze me just
to squeeze me.