

## Making Spring

Milk and sugar  
fill the cataract  
with sweet blindness  
the brook pummels  
stone upon stone  
your skin an eggshell  
in an owls nest  
before we were animals  
we were bird song  
cherry wood  
smoke in the morning  
abandon this weary roadside  
the clay before your feet  
disappears into channels  
drink from a new watercourse  
honey maple lemon  
salt and vinegar  
press my lips  
little death little death  
this sprig this bud  
from how began  
what we have left

## Torch Bearer

This morning broke like a heart  
in an empty rib cage.

Sheets of valley fog lift  
and fall.

Spirits and organs have fled.

The blue sodden mountain  
and the river to the east.

The hills they burn  
in the west.

Hooves cleave and the stag shudders-  
language is mute  
speak lashing tongue of sumac.

Our inventory will be no more  
then what it is now.

Jars canned, drums capped, bales strung and meat packed  
when days were endless  
and the sun  
wholesale and granted for.

I know you fear what follows these last gleanings  
but I said it earlier

before the fall came on our heels  
that I put light by too:  
Well cured, trimmed and straight grained.

For when November is a marshland,  
December a free fall,  
and January a rubble,  
I'll tend the fire  
and stoke the blood pumping coals  
to burn bright and bring back  
the hands that grow from  
a beat, and reach for the light.

Between the river  
and the mountain,  
in the overgrown maple grove-  
Even the fallen down sugar house  
has a sunken firebox that still smolders.  
A ruin and glowing vintage that is ours.

## A Felling

The woodsman leaves the forest  
with a certain kind of hunger.  
He offers the crown to the roots  
in a bright winter ground vestment  
littered with whorls of needles.  
Light pines for an empty space.

Undoing creation is work.  
Aiming the notch cut, making a hinge,  
plunging until the saw spins teeth  
that cut nothing - every last fiber  
severed leading to that moment

when the saw protest at an idle,  
the heft sundered the longing severed.  
To know when the green bough  
weighted with snow is sun found,  
released and summoned.

## Animal Husbandry

Every day they lick  
The salt block just out of reach  
My job: put it back