

## The Churches of East Berlin

There is only one way  
and when the wire has run thin  
that you are relying on  
    when that has been stretched  
to breaking and you  
feel that it is time  
    to cash it in  
then do not be mistaken, do not  
be led astray  
by the sounds  
of the forlorn  
beauty lies in  
    choosing to move  
forward, come what  
may  
    The way through  
is like a song; it is more like a  
vapor  
    but stronger  
I am one of the lesser birds  
like the pine siskin or the common red poll  
whose mottled underbelly does well  
to hide him from intruders  
    I am not adonis  
with the torso of a bull  
    but have looked truth  
in the eye, on occasion,  
    the well of sadness  
and come out, if not whole,  
then with most of my parts,  
anyhow,  
    whatâ€™s done is done  
this moment now  
    is what I have  
like the churches of East Berlin  
still standing  
    amidst the ruin  
were one to go in  
    to the sanctuary  
you would begin  
    to feel the press of  
time, wooing  
    like a scheme  
begin to be removed  
from your shoulders  
    like a curtain drape  
when we are young  
    and insistent  
time is our friend  
    but then, it becomes  
if not an enemy, then,

at least a business  
partner, who we hold  
off at arm's length  
and, then, try to get  
used to the silent truce  
maybe even enjoy  
it, now and then  
in the summer months  
when Spring has ended  
and the chores are done

I have looked for  
the answers  
in little things  
no bigger than my thumb  
and for the truth  
that is past my eyes  
to see what might  
be revealed by reflection  
I have looked to the  
skies  
and felt the blood  
in my veins, running thick  
and heavy  
    as if it were an ointment  
composed of lye  
    and other heady ingredients  
    all the while watching  
and waiting in high alert  
for some signalman  
to tell me that it is safe  
to walk by  
What will become of us  
I don't know  
    whether we will be left high and dry  
like a collection of bones  
reflecting white in the midday sun  
    of these outer limits  
all we can say  
is that we pressed our  
heads against them  
when given a chance  
that we tried -  
and were grateful for  
the opportunity  
but that now, it is time  
to formulate a second  
plan, to shield away ruin and to step into the fire  
or die