Fall 2001

Doctrine of Wind

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DOCTRINE OF WIND

Old with the huddled sparrow on the iron bridge. Long view from the dark water. The cold. How difficult it becomes to believe the things believed. Spike lightning in the west: ice cracking from the trees. In the mountains, aftershock landslides, coffins still in short supply.

Dead weight of March snow on winter's tooth and bone. The truss-caged bridge shaking. Rumble of the wooden deck. At the edge of the city smoke, artillery fire. Broken branches.

On the fresh splinter a finger of sap: spring will come, but not here. This year no medicine again for children in the highlands. There's a bitterness in the barley. You can smell it. New rye flattened.

Another cold snap in Gujarat. The Christians keep burning down their own houses for heat in the police report. How to reach tomorrow? What's twenty-four hours when
the weather has had its way
since before the four aboriginal
rivers ran.
Half-past four,
already a quarter moon. The road
winding into night. Headlands
at the splintered woods mined.
The whistle of a retreating figure
ahead could be God.
Or someone else, a spitting image
whistling in the dark.