

JAMES BRASFIELD

The Chair and the Pipe

(van Gogh)

Leaves come cured and shredded.
I ignite them, inhale them.
Blood totes them through the heart.

Smoke curls from the charred bowl
and from my lungs, turns
just above the olive grove, vanishes.

Crows circle high over the trees.
Where to from this little yellow house?
Snow falls, each flake a crystal petal.

Each branch gathers up its layer.
Seeds from the sunflower
lay eclipsed in the frostburnt herbs.

Today, at one stroke of my brush
wind threw shadows from my pipe — dry shards
closing my eyes. Theo, I saw

the still deeper shades of black
unending. Think of the sacks of ash
I could have worked into garden, field, and sky.