

PAUL GIBBONS

Mailbox

I have tried the acorns in my little acorn court,
have burdened one with divorce,
another with the sentence of being dry and small
its whole life. I have carried
your letters to the house
and never thought once about
the welfare of the mailbox
or of the sod
the gardeners take from the nursery,
or of the harried men downshifting their logging trucks at night
so that every bundled cornstalk tied to the promenades
of the houses quivered in their wake.
Now, when I am considering
how clean the house is, how
ragged the coffee tastes,
however I meant to try the small things in the world
I repent I repent . . .
I think coming to the mailbox today
left me blind and glassy,
courageous, even,
enough to stand on the yellow stripe
and hold your letter like a handkerchief
to wave at the passing trucks.
In the time it takes to cross the road
I wish there were greater colors,
some red hell that would
rise and shatter, rise
and shatter, the small things of the house and yard

hinged together in a long
line extending into the hills.
I would thread each small leaf or acorn or letter
into a great necklace
and swallow them
and then crawl away into the willows.
Today there was a great disturbance of swallows.
And a proliferation of squirrels.
In my room with the doilies for curtains
the autumn light spirals through
as I open your letter.
From the torn edge
I see the liberated scrawls
already tilting and reeling.