

AMY FLEURY

Two Solitudes

I.

Awake in the bleakest part of the night,
I listen to rain fall like apology,
kneading the pillow to its fresher side.
At last I kick free from the rucked up sheets
and feel my way down the hall, through rooms
made strange by furniture sketched against
muzzy gray. There is no husband in this house
as I once thought there would be, no children
turning in easeful sleep. At the stove I twist
the knob till the thwicking burner ignites
a blue ring that breathes to bring the teapot
to a pitch pipe hum. Perhaps, all along,
I have been misreading the dark.

II.

Standing amid the understory's frostheave
and fretwork of fern, I listen to the patois
of thaw tell, in seeps and soughs, the secrets
of this ice-crazed lake. Such an afternoon
is cold enough to scour my lungs, to prick tears
from my eyes, making a prism of birch light.
All the intimacy of winter comes down
to these quiet footfalls in the snow. I gather
an armload of wood so that I might make
a little fire for myself in the evening.