

# BlazeVOX 11

Spring 2011

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From some catalog  
and I'm still lifting the Earth  
for valleys and more shadow

--I have three shadows now, one  
kept dark, covered with moonlight  
and between my shoulders

broken mountainside :the huge UPS truck  
creaking as if the shovel  
and leverage --a cardboard lid

and everything I touch is brown  
taking hold the way all boxes  
open the ground then turn away

and though there's no dirt inside  
my hand already aches  
--I don't know where to sign my name.

\*

Your left hand first and this cellar pipe  
thaws the way all roots  
pressure the ice, begin adding on

--you will decorate the attic  
and every Spring more paint, the plumber  
shaking his head, the pipe

should be drained. It makes no sense  
while you tack on the solder  
drop by overflowing drop

--you will scrub the stairs  
as if a fountain means something to you  
and your bedroom even in winter its window

broken open for someone coming with flowers  
--you make sure, offer him the old wrench  
rusted shut, the family heirloom

you know he won't use, will let you hold it  
folded in waxpaper and in the other hand  
you carry the sun closer, the headwaters

from its mountainsides --both hands  
lifting this abandoned pipe  
to your lips, to the warming rags

and dust --once each year and the mist  
invisible --you tell him you didn't know,  
you  
just forgot, you weren't there.

\*

Hurt though its leaves  
smothering the cry, each branch  
disguised, flies out as birds  
still battered by wings -haze

festers in these wounds :the dark bark  
tries to trap the sun  
tighter, tighter and always the pain  
escapes :the harrowing cut

roots hear first and each footstep  
softer than rot  
nearer and nearer till nothing snaps  
and everything falls on its side

-the tree still breathing  
fed at last :infected, my saw  
swooping to bring  
what might have been the sun  
and the tree remembering this heat  
binds the blade :each leaf  
sharp and shaking.

\*

You will fatten your fingers on mud  
as soldiers have always marched  
are fed powerful fields and your heart

that once measured time  
chip at the underground mist  
the hillside where your steps

stopped to heal -you will feed your hand  
the way leaves still lift their tree  
and the strong current in ice  
thaw, the water  
re-heated, shrinking, giving in.

You eat forever! both arms around the Earth  
and in the evenings your breath  
the damp scent for all footsteps  
-I come to your grave

with boundary stones, remove my shoes  
lessen and from the sky  
its galaxies and from the ground  
soaked with tears it can't remember  
-I bring you stones and the way back.

\*

Again the colors return :the sun  
paired with their orbit, flower to flower  
and the migrating winds  
back from nesting on feathers  
-from that distant snow  
so many reds and yellows whose first meal  
is the warm light and rain

-we drink this milk to begin each year  
and our yard again head first  
enfolds into that fertilizing song  
these birds learn from their wings  
from their caves in the ice and air

and we are returned windswept, matched  
with the fire that knows only winter and  
winds  
again house to house :this flower  
carrying the Earth aloft  
and under each soft wing more sweetness  
not yet red or yellow or snow -each year  
more petals -as if we were going somewhere  
cold

I hold your hand and the year  
naked, wet, wading through tears  
-the same small morning each Spring  
we plant another circle, a song  
over the small grave, count the blooms  
sort the arriving stones.

\*

She sits as if on its way  
faint --a cradlesong lost for hours  
and the roads are everywhere.

Under her blouse the lips  
don't move --a horse drinking from her  
breast  
takes the bit to its mouth, leaping  
as leaves toward winter still stampede  
and around the warm tree  
delicate hooves, red and brown and distances  
--the tree too, soaking from her heart  
how white the roads are, how dry

--any minute now, the flat stone  
clinging to her torn blouse  
closer, closer  
into her lullaby and lifeless arms.