

Untraveled Roads

How quickly wilderness
reclaims untraveled roads.
I followed paths of Boyle
and Gay-Lussac to mountain
passes hewn by Gibbs
where Maxwell's Demon sat:
a difficult terrain,
yet, traveled daily, these
were unobstructed roads.
I went away and after
five short years returned.
Now tangled grasses grew
where wheel-tracks once had been.
The outline of the road
was well defined and with
some plodding I still made
the journey. It was twenty
years before I came
again. Now bush and bramble
blotted out the way.
Travel was impossible
and alders arched overhead
shut out much of the light.

— J. H. Lowell

Havertown, Pennsylvania

City Almshouse

It stood among
fields of grass
and flowers
under fair-weather clouds.
Bulfinch was the designer.
Inside old men
and women
spent their days
in long rooms:
one chair,
one bed apiece.