The Convert

Your feet are bread.
soggy with water and blood
they begin to bend,
fall away

and your hands, one
a duck wing to the watch joint
the other a mitten
over a charcoal nub.
one flaps,

the other points

nevertheless you are rising
like bark
like the striae on a cliff
for thousands of feet where the water drips,

through a circle growing larger,
yourself,
the sun in rainbow burning through snow

but around you schoolhouses whip,
faces shoot from windows.
horses stumble, legs stick
and emerge in other places as burros

flour drips from your nose and ears.
you take out your hollow blade
to scrape the straw, the dead flesh away
but the blade hits the steel wrist bone.

With the Rustics

Hogs are growing from the roots of trees; but the ground is frozen. we search the linings of our coin purses but find only movies at the bottom.

their sleek jaws become ships and black clouds that fly off. the eyes stay where they are. on the next hill a peasant threshes the stubble. they circle and flash lightnings over him.

meanwhile we have eaten the green bacon, pulled the strings from our teeth. jump up on the wooden cliff and thrash at the sky with our flails for awhile.

the sun goes out; a threat of snow. but the measles are spreading hill over hill; we feel it, buckshot in the jowls and private parts. and slip back into the cold trees to hide, til spring, behind the pimples.

-- Peter Wild

Alpine, TX

it is said there are words disguised and waiting among us as rock flower or bird a network to devise in us a poem

> farmers swarm the roads up the pyramid this day of the virgin. gourds, lemons and pears clutter the pathways women are on their knees selling apples. diesel trucks & buses chuff along slowly filling the air with black caterpillars. we scuttle mindless bargaining our way to satisfaction -sit down for a beer and then back into the crowd our fuzzv eves and smiling, watching the rain clouds come in.

-- Bjarne Tokerud

Puebla, Puebla, Mexico