

# Seasoning

*Thomas Asplund*

## I

That fine white burst of bush blossom  
Has come again. Blast-  
ing through the winter crust  
And scattering the afterbirth of spring,  
    It crept to us from under the eave  
    Through the dark cloak of winter's sleeve  
    The brutal blossoms break and heave  
    And smash the antique, lacquered leaves;  
And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Can't you smell the violence of it —  
    the banditry of birth?  
In that reckless resurrection  
    fair boughs burn  
    and fair boughs glint  
The menace of spring's silence.

## II

The smallness of it all makes one wonder;  
the sitting on a smooth bank  
in the river smell and sun  
and ants and grass  
tickling up the sleeve.  
The dry kiss  
and the moist kiss.  
The baby reeling through the grass on reckless legs  
and you  
stretching, head back amid the rubble of our feast,  
reaching beyond me for the tiny sun  
blink

you are gone with the flick of an eye

blink

gone are the empty cartons of a summer day

blink  
gone is the shameless sun.  
Suddenly my child stands before the tiny sun  
a giant shadow before the tiny sun  
and I can see that in his reeling quest for age  
    he has stolen my years  
    and shatters in the prism of my tears  
    and with the tiny river I am young no more.

### III

Now that smoky Tuesday is past  
We have shelled the patchwork counterpane  
And closed the camphor chest.  
The world melts through wet windows;  
The chill warm wash of rain  
Brushes down the shingle siding.

In this room —  
In the weary hum of silence  
I sit cross-legged in the gloom  
Before the dusty delicacy of family china  
In its glass-faced tomb.

### IV

In the thin part of the afternoon  
When light, like a loved child,  
Is gone too soon and Earth shrinks small  
And cold like the breast of an aging mother,  
I discover myself on the other  
Side — the thin black back  
Of a mercury mirror, too cold  
For quick, too black  
For silver,  
Where once I stood  
Behind a parent's brooding oaken dresser  
Hiding from an afternoon of childhood.  
Hiding from both  
The fact and the reflection.