

# Luggage

*Dixie Partridge*

(for one leaving)

You are required to keep the poundage low:  
two large cases and a carry-on:  
what you take for months overseas.  
In a year of famine, you have volunteered  
for hunger in a strange language  
you begin to force onto your tongue,  
words affirming ways of irrigation:  
seeds salvaged, sprouts toward green  
in the fields.

What you need most was there  
before you packed, not fire in the eyes,  
but deeper, not things you have  
but what you enjoy.  
You've planted vegetables and flowers  
in old tires — a family's garden;  
pruned massive lilac trees and honeysuckle  
that crowded paths; painted fences  
and repaired collapsing sheds  
in that dying farm town.

When I walk back  
toward my car and education, the acquiring  
of whatever will allay my dread of poverty,  
I carry nothing from the airport  
but an ache and tremble in my hands.

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*DIXIE PARTRIDGE has published poetry in over forty journals and in several anthologies, including The Montana Review, The Greensboro Review, Quarterly West, and Sunstone. She is completing the manuscript for her second book of poetry. Her first, Deer in the Haystacks (Ahsakta Press), was published in 1984. She lives in Richland, Washington. "Nocturne, October" first appeared in a slightly different form in Crab Creek Review, 1986.*

