

# Descending Order

*Dixie Partridge*

Snow falling into the pond  
leaves you weak with its metaphor  
of sadness, as though all that makes you  
could be instantly broken down,  
leaving whole only the blackness of the pool  
to dilate around you.  
You push yourself to walk on,  
the pollen light of autumn  
gone—empty winter something to return to,  
to remind us that less is needed,  
and of what might be left  
to lose.  
Tangles of reddish vine  
clog the path.  
You turn back and recognize  
the silence, but this time  
it closes like water  
around breath.  
Sound gnarls your throat.  
You look toward remaining  
leaves—downturned and still.  
The sky lowers . . . stone.  
It's as though the years  
of trying to retrieve  
a language of grasses,  
of aspen leaves and riverbeds,  
have been misplaced—  
that they were never  
speaking to you  
at all.