

## Hyperboreal

Arnica nods heavy-headed on the bruised slope.  
Peaks recede in all directions, in heat-haze,  
Evening in my recollection.

The shield at my throat ornamental and worse.  
We descended the gully thrummed into confusion  
With the last snowmelt a tricklet into mud, ulterior—

One wolfbane bloom, iodine-hued, rising on its stalk  
Into the luster of air: June really isn't June anymore,  
Is it? A glacier's heart of milk loosed from a thousand

Summer days in extravagant succession,  
From the back of my tongue, dexterous and sinister.

## At Anaktuvuk Pass

Motherless on the cusp of the Giant's Valley  
I am childless, reduced.

Stark things bellow all about me,  
Dusted with new snow and inaccessible.

The pass runnels off its axis, lapsing  
A few degrees from true north: devoid,

Our dialect differs. *Miluk* a mountain's name.  
Barren-ground caribou arriving beneath it

From *Napakrualluit*, a place that looks like trees.  
Once anointed with grease and ashes—

Now distant from sage, sorrel, and stinging nettle,  
Divided into self again.

## In a House Apart

You hurt me, then,  
Burnt a bird's white plumage—  
Claim that we are the better for it,  
That we will heal in time.

Strident and inaccurate  
Despite all proximity,  
The mountains no longer  
Made me feel better.

The year in its wheel of winter  
And its small cylinder of light  
In excess. Far pillars could  
Resemble human figures

Though only rock rises  
From some progression  
Of dust, demand, and rotten  
Wood. I place my hand on stone

And become stone myself.

## Akkumin Qanituq/Swift Descent

*for Paniqrak Quyuraq*

Words turn to dry grass  
                        beneath my cramped foot,  
Anger to grease ice  
                        on the sea, once turbulent.

In another room I hear her voice over  
Again the creaking of the pipes.

In another room she has not gone  
Unforgiven and shunned.

Another room is filled with light,  
As full as her white wall tent  
The summer that she took me in,

Pressed fresh leaves against my wounds  
As if  
                        as if to heal them.