

Trail Coltsfoot

our guttering winter's
 final blizzard
dizzies bluebright
 pouring southward
 beyond the gold language
of the sun as it does not set
 & silvering women
 round the thaw
& glint like tin
 of Báhpajávri
where herons
 corvids gulls
 & four loons
quorum chasing light
 an arctic tern
 turns shriek
 to ternery
& pearling nevernight
 strikes coltsfoot
 forth from marled soil
& plitched
 hysteranthous is strewn
 into a line to track
as a woman crossing fjordward
 through the graves
palms these wilting
 capitulum

& smoked char & salmon
 splits through bread
& ptarmigan
 breast atop
a soup
 of ptarmigan
stomach emptied
 of the earliest
greenleaved willow
 & reindeer
 legs
braised in broth
 & heaped
with last year's
 redcurrant

& the lactated
 cream
of the taxed
 herd
now swum
 in cloudberry
 & then a tea
 seeps
in snowmelt
 of the torn blueberry
branches

& their campaniform

antheses

—may we ply the

time trailing
coltsfoot—

as loss trails

the last bloom

of the light as we leave her

with such women leafing through us

After Anchorage

Told to put a light in my lamp
I turned from a daughter's work
to take a tabular rock in hand
then struck as hail would strike,
as a man who has grown sick
of his wife will scrape and grind
as if he no longer hells infants
world-ward in their blood-rush,
hollowing a cup to hold the oil
I would otherwise have swallowed:
I trust in nothing near, hungering
for the light of the leaf as it unfurls,
tending what I can, beguiling none.
I tangled my neck in tresses, cutting
the necks from my dresses, snarling
what I knew, what I know I learned
down through my dirt floor. I could
have burned the smear of bear tallow
I once felt forced to eat on an arm
of the sea whose waves but wrought
their white across and up into wind
when what should harbor winter
now darkens down to parch.