

Field: A Hymn For Eye & Ear

by Richard Hague

1

Goldenrod that ticks
 in patches, dried,
 or swamped in drizzly spring—
 come up again
 inside this churning month
 and turn the sun on
 down here at our height:
 living is a matter of good light.

2

Green moss heals the stone,
 delivered, like old glass,
 to scratch and crack.
 It makes a green man
 of a standing trunk,
 crawls across a gully
 on an inch-thick locust pole,
 invades the old well,
 a richer kind of water.

3

Snail shells listen
 to the field, ground
 colored ears. They hear
 the fox bark from
 the fallen trees, the pond carp
 splashing in the middle of the night
 when water rises toward the moon
 but stalls in overhanging bones
 of sumac, hickory, oak,
 to drape its knots and strands there
 like a firm thin flesh whose pulse is nightwind,
 landslides, storm—
 all noises that
 the snail shells hear
 as if from endless distance
 sound in circles then
 sing inward, inward,
 in those brittle ears.

4

And what is blood?
 That same stream in big trees.
 That green skim of the insect
 smashed on stone.
 That standing water in which
 straw infuses spinners, tumblers,
 gliders with clear feet.
 That blue speck in the jelly
 of spring ponds.
 That heat which blossoms
 into talons of the hawk
 or white bill of the great ghost
 bird of night.
 That drumming in the drowner's ears.
 That rip-current in the landlocked field
 which sets a body flatly rafting
 through the troughed and crested earth
 toward the many shores of stone.

5

So fox-claw, bird track,
 turned stone drying in the sun,
 so the smashed grass where the deer lay,
 bone-splint in the creek sand,
 fish eye blue as birds' eggs,
 fungi like the pale tongues of the trees,
 puffballs smoking after shrew's leap
 toward the beetle,
 so rye grass steering wind
 along its thousand courses,
 toad carcass leathering in dry-rot stump,
 broken ribs askew,
 thumbnail skulls like tarnished spoons,
 blue flies glinting in the folds of cow-chips,
 pigweed with its thick leaves in the log-shade,
 blacksnakes heating on flat stones,
 whirligigs amuck in inch-deep ditches,
 mud wasps lazing at the edges—

so all are of the helter-skeltering
 to haunt or speed or stall or bury
 spilling from the center of all things,
 all the music of our seeing
 gone to fire and blood and eyesight
 in this upland day's
 vast beginning light.