



## The Bright Burning

We are always forgetting this world  
though each day it kisses us  
with its lavish steaming breath  
though the earth drums in our ears  
though the flowers turn as we walk by  
amazed at our forgetfulness.

Knowing that we would forget  
the last god knew what he must do.  
He made himself a grave of leaves,  
laying down his great body in the forest soil  
and, dying over and over again  
until he became tree,  
wrote prayers of thankfulness in the thick trunk  
whose words swam upwards  
and became leaves.

Now the painter sits amongst the strewn  
litter of bright blessings  
beneath a wild sky chattering  
with prayer flags.  
Knowing also what he must do  
he wets the brush and stroke upon stroke  
sings the trees and the mumbling river awake.  
Moving steadily back and forth  
between the leaves and the eager palette  
he calls the light  
out of the dark heart of the forest.

Beneath Dartmoor's oaks I too bent once  
with such poised concentration  
making fire from friction,  
my locked arm driving the drill back and forth  
into the ivy hearth I had made,  
nursing the glowing ember  
and blowing the fanfare of flame  
awake in my hands.

Sometimes it takes an unwavering faith  
and a passionate, muscular discipline  
to coax the light out of the darkness.  
Sometimes a man must go alone into the forest  
and die into its heart  
so that he can bring back  
the forgotten pieces of the world,  
a world kept alive only by this:  
our constant remembering  
our constant telling  
our constant calling out  
far into the bright burning.

