

## One Song in Winter

She wraps cloth strips about her hand  
the pencil shakes — falls on the box  
a watchdog barks out 'Bitter root'  
as nightfall shuts its iron locks.

Torn paper like a rag  
reveals its hunger and its thirst  
handwriting spiky as barbed wire  
could cut the eye that reads it first.

Sharp as a star the first word shines  
bald as the moon the last  
this empty sack wrapped round her back  
could fill with tears as fast.

Our father's strength huge arms of clouds  
flexing above a field of maize  
with open hands gates eyelids hearts  
creation gave its praise

and finds at last for some who lie  
on prison straw alone  
one soul to watch and one to rest  
marrow asleep in aching bone.