

# Orphans

Bartosz Milewski

We left for the sleepy fields at the break of dawn  
Marched shivering in single file  
Before the fog lifted to reveal the pale sun  
One nun leading,  
Another closing

We picked potatoes  
That were left behind after autumn harvest  
We gathered dried rhizomes  
Started a bonfire

We threw potatoes into the flames  
Watched sparks flicker and die  
Stirred ambers with sticks  
Watched crows hop away  
Too tired to fly

The sun soon faded  
The wind picked up and it started snowing.  
One after another  
The orphans froze  
White lips blackened with potato ash.

The younger nun turned to me  
“Take your time,” she said in a sweet voice,  
“Nobody’s waiting.”