

Lemon Tree

You asked me, yesterday,
if I remembered that lemon tree we saw.
I told you yes. but now I wonder,
why did you ask?

You didn't find it curious?
There weren't any leaves on the damn thing.
But the lemons, oh my, the lemons,
each as grand and watchful as that giant Buddha in Leshan.
Hanging heavy on the bare boughs.
The tree seemed to pour every thing it had into those lemons,
and it held them tight,
even though the season for harvest had come and gone.

Rafael Burger

Ash

Days like yesterday afternoon –
Which was golden all the way through,
But seemed especially so before dusk –
During which you couldn't help but stare at the mountain,
Because it hadn't been so clear in so long,
And when you turned, you saw that your friend had the same idea –
Where the breeze flitted through treetops, cool but not cold –
Are insufficient.

Remember that nor'easter that blew in overnight?
Like bombers in formation – silent and somber until just overhead.
Remember snowplows that scrambled day in and day out,
Frantic as buckets in a leaky boat?
Since that storm, souging disgusts me –
Wind should break the branches.

Look to drought-stricken timber, drier than bone –
To the blaze which licks and leaps, hungrier than the gale can carry it.
See the joyous thrill in the spires it shoots –
Fireworks without the insult of black powder,
Eating their source thin without a thought of what comes next–
And love me, like flame loves the forest.

Rafael Burger