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Coronach for Spring

Gilean Douglas

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Coronach for Spring

Frost curls the edge of night
and day is a travesty of sun.
The huckleberry stands congealed in blood
while elder shoots, so happily begun,
shrink stemward hard and tight
as unshared sorrow.
Willows abort their hopes
(what now, what now?),
hemlocks arch darkly over
their seed on sterile snow
(tomorrow—yes, surely tomorrow!)
and we, chewing our year old cud,
pace more darkly still; bending the bough,
searching the gale-bared slopes.
For we know, we know.

Nostrils hunt to the east for the scent of rain
coursing the hills.
Only black hunger there and fierce claws tearing
at spectered green; den reek that spills
to the western lairing
of fox and carrion stench. Hunger and death and pain
on any wind that blows;
(hood the wide eyes, tighten the full-lipped mouth)
Taurus still to the south
and no spring.
(But spring always comes!)
Not only late, but never
and the rising gust of fear.
We were so sure and so clever,
(*we knew, we knew*).
Now muffle the drums
of the mind, let no word sing;
underground the green hope and above:
“The light of the world lies here.”

—*Gillean Douglas*