

42.

The seaweed can't say where it washed ashore this morning;  
soon my grandmother won't know who I am.

Everyone is singing their song,  
some sing their last verse.

An oak nods above a pond,  
marshy banks with rotting trees.

I hold my grandmother's hand — her last days have started.

The moon shines over the pond,  
the heather on the hill

has a strange color in the moonlight.

The tears did not stop before I parked the car.

Now the moon's hidden by clouds —  
thanks.

Green moss streams  
down the hill, clumps against frost-covered crags.

43.

The seabed and the sand  
where living seaweed

moves in slow motion

back and forth as if swaying with the wind,  
biding time until the first mornings of black ice.

Hoar-frost settles in at the roots of trees,  
creeps along the trunk,

like a human

getting up again after the fall.

Frost will glaze all the branches,  
the last leaves

fall to earth

as the wind pulls at the gutters.

45.

Sunlight pierces down in between  
the frozen fronds of seaweed.

I'm starting to get used to the waves,  
the sand, the season.

Bits of a crumbled crow's nest  
dance in the wind on the road,

twigs and wool twirling

back and forth,

knocking against the garden wall and the window.

I'm waiting for pinpricks of silence,

a wait that adds up to nothing more than a cessation  
of everything — the frost, the trees, the animals, the leaves,  
forks, plates, mourning clothes in the dresser,

dried flowers, heather,  
the stone we once picked up on the beach.  
It all seems strange now.  
I'm in love with what used to be.  
The cows are freezing like statues in the fog.  
Water pipes burst like clogged arteries.

58.

The road is hidden here,  
only glimpsed through black branches  
that reflect the light.  
Tree remember everything in their rings —  
every change from summer to fall,  
even this december morning  
when the direction of the wind, the season, the shift in light must now triumph against  
the darkness.

59.

During the day the house is empty.  
Hard wind drives in off the bay.  
Breakers wash seaweed ashore.  
You are not here.  
A lone cat enters the garden.  
It will be dark soon.  
The day ends faster than it began.  
The gusts fling sand and grass against the window.  
The cat has gone.

70.

The garden is indifferent.  
The cold, grey exhalation of my breath is unreal  
as a quiet song.  
This morning the fogbanks are fighting  
the few patches of blue.  
Day comes reluctantly.  
It's the shortest day of the year —  
5 hours and 8 minutes of daylight.  
Beneath the garden loam,  
flatworms eat earthworms.  
Moss campion, wood horsetail.  
Now the songbirds are dying.

72.

The beach has disappeared this morning.  
Waves break against the jetty.  
I can't see anything.

The third storm in as many days,  
ten bad weathers in the last week.  
But I don't know much about meteorology  
or natural science,  
can hardly read a barometer  
and get my wind directions mixed up,  
especially northeast and southwest.  
I've lived in so many continents  
but now this garden,  
this beach,  
this mountain,  
this seaweed,  
my own tracks in the snow  
all become my new continent.

73.

I hear the breakers roar,  
see the line of dead seaweed.  
I've returned to this fog,  
the frail light of winter.  
Here, between squalls and your tender smile,  
I have returned  
to everything I've run from.  
Childhood days. The bracing sea.  
The mountains and the fog.  
This morning, all the mountains around us were white  
like a castle made of frost.  
The sandpipers are skittering at the water's edge.  
The days are getting longer.