

Oracle

My daughter sees that nettles sting.
Still she wants the bitter leaf,
 taste of ashes on the tongue.
Sweet green rising under our feet,
still she wants the bitter leaf.
 My mother kneels in the dirt, singing.
Sweet green rising under our feet.
All the winter branches go up in smoke.
 My mother kneels in the dirt, singing,
she spreads white root-hairs into dark.
All the winter bones go up in smoke.
 Her death a tree beginning to bud,
I spread white ashes into dark.
Across the stream, my daughter laughing,
 her death a tree beginning to bud.
She wants to know if people burn.
Across the smoke, my daughter laughing.
 My daughter sees that nettles sting,
she wants to know if people burn.
Iron branches on my tongue.