The Stones

I owned a slope full of stones.  
Like buried pianos they lay in the ground,  
shards of old sea-ledges, stumbling blocks  
where the earth caught and kept them  
dark, an old music mute in them  
that my head keeps now I have dug them out.  
I broke them where they slugged in their dark  
cells, and lifted them up in pieces.  
As I piled them in the light  
I began their music. I heard their old lime  
rousing in the breath of song that has not left me.  
I gave pain and weariness to their bearing out.  
What bond have I made with the earth,  
having worn myself against it? It is a fatal singing  
I have carried with me out of that day.  
The stones have given me music  
that figures for me their holes in the earth  
and their long lying in them dark.  
They have taught me the weariness that loves the ground,  
and I must prepare a fitting silence.

The Supplanting

Where the road came, no longer bearing men,  
but briars, honeysuckle, buckbush and wild grape,  
the house fell to ruin, and only the old wife's daffodils  
rose in spring among the wild vines to be domestic  
and to keep the faith, and her peonies drench the tangle  
with white bloom. For a while in the years of its wilderness  
the wayfaring drunk slept clinched to the floor there  
in the cold nights. And then I came, and set fire  
to the remnants of house and shed, and let time  
hurry in the flame. I fired it so that all  
would burn, and watched the blaze settle on the waste  
like a shawl. I knew those old ones departed  
then, and I arrived. As the fire fed, I felt rise in me  
something that would not bear my name—something that  
bears us  
through the flame, and is lightened of us, and is glad.

To Know the Dark

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.  
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,  
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,  
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

The Springs

In a country without saints or shrines  
I knew one who made his pilgrimage  
to springs, where in his life's dry years  
his mind held on. Everlasting,  
people called them, and gave them names.  
The water broke into sounds and shinings  
at the vein mouth, bearing the taste  
of the place, the deep rock, sweetness  
out of the dark. He bent and drank  
in bondage to the ground.