



Accusing Nature

One big wet snow and I can't see at all
where bulbs had broken through. The sugared wings
of hemlock droop, dribbling bits of burden
sporadically upon the ground. The patterns
pock an innocent white smock and grow
wider, betray the blades below. Shrill, one

goose calls for exodus. Their rush leaves one
frail gosling stumbling on the ice. She's all
the turkey vulture eats that day. He'll grow
more fussy as Spring's casualties take wing,
when births give rise to predetermined patterns
of collapse, backs that buckle under burden.

You artless creatures interweave your burdens
with the weight of life itself, as one
whip of willow, braided. Motley patterns
brand your breast, suggest surrender. All
the beatings change the color of your wing,
predict the angle of your sun. You'll grow

in the direction you can run. You'll grow
to pass your constitution on, to burden
the landscape with your lineage. Your wings
won't shelter them. Why don't you care? Not one
remorseful instinct in your gut. Are all
your masquerades unplanned? Although these patterns

can't fix footprints to the floor, they're patterns
your father's father must have danced. Don't grow
attached because of warm traditions - all
your history's unwritten. There's no burden
of your past. The melting snow exposes one
set of muddy tracks, and then a wing

chewed off a jay. What can I say? A wing's
a wing, an eye's an eye and it's the pattern
of artful creatures to suppose that one
has wronged another in the fray. We grow
compassion furtively beneath the burden
of a cold, whitewashed conscience. Under all

the frozen dirt and over all the wings,
we search for patterns that explain our burdens
and hope for one that heartens us to grow.