

PETER WILD

Pillow Fungus

In my fringed mouton shirt
dyed to resemble beaver skin
I go out with a geologist's hammer behind the shed
where the pillow fungus grows even in droughts
to consider the shattered flagstone left over
from building the front sidewalk years ago.
It's lightning the ancients believed grew out of the earth
whenever they turned their backs, what Moses threw down
in disgust with himself and thereafter refused
to bed his wife, became a stutterer,
a man who could talk only to himself. But I
have a purpose for this chaos, to build a rock mound
around my prize cactus the dog is digging out.
As I work she dashes back and forth
behind lips that sparkle,
eyes strawberry wine, looking out from the bamboo grove,
stealing my tools. Hours later it's done,
something violent held in stasis, a puzzle
fit together, with one great green vegetable
growing out of the middle, much as one can see
all around here, acre after acre,
left over from pre-Columbian times that the explorers
first encountered and unable to figure them out
nearly gave up their faith, their love
for their families back home, but saved
by the knowledge of the clouds,
gathering mountains of vapor now and then
cracking open to reveal their silver veins within
where they pointed with their swords,
dumbfounded instructors of themselves.