

DEBORAH BURNHAM

Dowsing

All winter we cursed earth's water,
The black ice that crawled down the north cliff,
Then thawed, splitting the field's raw ends
Spilling the best soil to the river
While its fish plunge into streams
Running near the earth's heart.
Now, in these dry months, we walk these fields,
Sticks poking the dust, tongues thick as silt.
If we could call back our curses,
Those streams might pulse into our blood,
Ripple into our throats, now dry as pods.
But the sticks hang over our dry steps
And we hear our mothers,
Cursing their own waters where we rode,
Thrashing like fish,
Blind in a buried stream.

