

WILLIAM S. SAUNDERS

Spring Leaves

Must I tear leaves
to know them?
Their beauty, this Tuscan March,
is physical. Must I have
carnal knowledge of them?

One, dark green,
is crisp.
I crack it.

Another, grass,
bends over at its soft tip.
When I snap it in two,
clear water
swells at the wound.

Long, oniony grass
I nibble. Held firmly where
part meets part, the upper
can be gently slid
from the lower.
The tip is tender,
pungent in early spring.

The leaves fade from insect holes.
They are self-sufficient
if left their juices
and the air.

Carnally, they deny us.
We may touch them
if we do so windily,
or as we stroke hair.