

MARGARET RICKS

Wilderness Within

Dream a squall wind
from the farthestmost north woods, and beyond—
fanged with needles of sleet
an oracle roar
 out of a mouth of cavernous ice,
the purest breath
of spruce and salt.

Picture it streaming
through musty chambers
where barons assemble
robed in hereditary ermine,
 yellow, moth-eaten,
brushed and adjusted
by the dead hands of servile generations.

That wind
stirs the ancient fur alive,
it quivers grows eyes and jaws and whiskers,
on little frantic feet comes scrambling down.
Stripped of their pride, lords are no more
than cringing mortal flesh.

Paunched burghers are swinging jeweled maces

but nothing can hurt these now –

this river of creamy pelts, whitewater tumbling
out through a broken door.

Now that insatiable sob and whine
claws at silken walls of the fashion salon,
and the dead fox comes awake
to the cry of his mate tastes again
red agony of blood on snow.

Let him leap from your shoulder, and go, before

the teeth of his pain find your throat.