

## THE PRODIGAL

In the illness of surfeit, I've seen through  
the legerdemain of doctors, the placebos  
they're forever pulling from their pockets.  
I long for sleep, that dark pharmacy

with its shelves of empty bottles.  
Dawn hauls its ruddy load over the hill.  
Cars rasp along, antagonizing trees.  
One can't escape the past; I know—I tried.

Hard to believe how soon these cups were drained.  
I would fain have eaten husks fit for swine.  
This split I've got down the middle prevents  
me from knowing myself. At least the tree

I lean against feels solid. When one gets  
close enough to anything, all one sees  
are lacunae. It's good to see the holes,  
but not to fall through them, as I do now.

The willow droops its tenebrous crown at me.  
As though it told me so—how odious.  
Night, that obsidian satyr, has cantered off  
to other lands. All day I lie in pieces.

The pulchritude of angels leaves me cold;  
their world will never intersect with mine.  
This morning, I lost my way in seeking  
the scope of forests where branches stutter

in an arid wind's locust-bearing gusts.  
Now a tattered *No* coils back on itself,  
a wastrel shroud scarring the horizon  
where clouds pile up like fatted calves on altars.