

Tom Wayman

THE BLOSSOMING

*. . . I realize
That if I stepped out of my
body I would break
Into blossom.*

—James Wright

Icy air
drawn sweet into my nose and throat
as my skis pump and glide
tracking the valley

between spruce and fir, some cedar where a creek
trickles past humped white cornices
banked on either side of its flow.
And the cold on my face

increases as I pole and sway
out of the woods onto an unsheltered
white meadow or marsh
open to the wind

so the wax under my boards
stutters a little in the increased coolness
and then breaks smooth again
where the trail returns to the forest.

But as I steadily traverse a straight run
sheltered by evergreens on one hand
and on the other an unbroken expanse
above a pond,

a red-gold ovoid
expands within my chest
to fill the body cavity: I sense the rounded surface inside me
layered with glowing leaves

like scales, or overlapping
feathers, or small gilded ruddy plates
of armor. The ovate object
transmits, incarnates, an exultant

happiness: not sensual but kinetic,
an ecstasy of motion,
of function.
This delight is the pleasure

provided to an angel by
its body: nothing of soul
but the blessing of
an unearthly corporality

suspended now within me
—a ring of petals
merged tightly around their core,
a taut mass, with short tendril-like extensions

that insinuate their way
into my four oscillating limbs.
This manifestation proposes
the flesh of a peach

—that sweet, sun-warmed, juicy pulp—
were desiccated, wooden,
compared to the teeming fluid miracle
of its stone.