

clinging to its fur    were my own first matches  
over the toilet bowl    wooden soldiers  
with their red caps first    then black I loved  
the flash and fizzle    flushing them down  
afterwards but no one    heard the bear  
maybe it didn't scream    old anyway  
missing its teeth    and came to see  
so they went right on    when we heard the explosion  
we were still eating Well    my father said  
they've shot the bear    one hand on his water glass  
the big fingers opening    and closing  
in the silence    rays of dazzling light

## DANDELIONS

Dandelions    the first flowers I remember  
and after the trap door    leading to the cellar  
where preserves were stored    in blue-green jars  
the worst on her back    she had to bend over  
to get under their roots    calling them weeds  
spooning viciously or    with a kitchen knife  
dig down    she grunted like a pig  
she ravished the lawn    once she got started  
dirt leaves stones    everything flew out  
I saw marbles I had thought lost    unearthed  
bits of colored glass    crockery worms  
once even a garter snake    hacked up  
then try to join itself    I trailed along  
begging her Slow down slow down    your back momma  
but she kept right on    the loose skirts hiked  
above her knees    hair wild  
her red face    streaked with mud  
not one of them remained    when she was done  
and sat weeping    clutching her back  
And what are *you* looking at    she said can't I cry