

BASKET WITH BLUE OX

for Donna

Today it seems possible that myth alone could have made this place, or made it possible at least for us to be here, this small lake where once the great woodsman stepped, drunkenly, on his way home. Cross-legged on the dock we weave baskets of willow, mulberry root, small nests we dip again and again into the cool water. Only here could everything the past imagined for us seem true: how spring is a single season, that it somehow makes us tender. Or that the blue ox lies down each night on the far shore and wakes with a breath that blows off morning's fog. In their unsinkable boats our husbands fish close to that shore as we continue these baskets, fill them with stories. Our friend the loon listens to tale after tale; his frequent cry of belief detonates on the still air. The preposterous lies line up in our many baskets on the dock. We have made them and there is no limit to what they can hold. The lake is nothing less than the footprint of a man, these baskets the honor of hopeful hands, and men in boats must come back, ushering in the dark, carrying beautiful fishes.

JUST BE HOME BEFORE SUNDOWN

But I shrug off the red sweater
she's knit around me. It's not in me
to keep my shoulders always warm.
Or to get off the bus every time
at our same spot, as if other