

1970—SUMMER SCHOOL

Beneath a lens—
sprouts. Veins of roots.
I draw, proud
because I can draw.
Over my shoulder
I know the professor
knows I can draw.
When he is gone
I see the specimen
is root-upward,
stem-down.
The professor is kind,
always kind.
Pine.
On the field trip
I trail an assistant,
gather samples.
Salal.
I grow heavier
through the summer.
The professor's spaniel
is along all the way
to the side of the mountain,
an old dog.
Learning is harder
than before. I am older,
I am stranger.
I do not name it
loneliness all around.
I struggle to learn.
I do not name it so.
It happens, a struggle to enclose
the columns on the page.
Cedar.
I study specimens

by lamplight.
I eat many meals.
They punch my meal ticket.
My botany grades
are poor.
Fir.

SEAPORT

As though one can stand on a grassy hill
and look down on something with an explanation.

As though it has no center of chains and significance.
Always it is at the other side
of something, always effaced by what it has made.
Windowglass, grained and masoned face
of a businessworld building, manufacturing complex
down each side of a road from an Empiric cairn of stone
declaring the entrance to the Port of Tacoma.

As though it was not the beginning.
As though it is not ashamed.
As though it is not masked
itself inside low buildings.

As though it is not human muscle.
As though it is not a whistle rising through.
As though the horns in the fog have never happened.
As though it is not smoke above the city.

As though it does not ride away on the water,
the Maru we read white on black hull from the bus window
as the bus climbs past stands of trees on the slope,
as though what shines in the afternoon like a horse
in the child's car window—roan sawdust—does not ride away,
scented boards do not rise in a pile and float away,
as though the port is stationary.

As though nothing burns.