

MICHAEL CARLSON

*Galley-West*

Slushing rill, slow mile from where I frowned  
for the right to burn a pair of gloves,  
you will barb on the last slab of fray,  
work down, dissolve in your obstacles.  
The animals destroy what they find  
of your luggage of grease painted stones.  
Will you parch into a bitter plea?

Sad as a cliff, careful of the close,  
pitched forward by feverish soil,  
I pray below for the still blond rind,  
woodrot and roots, a rug of gnashed seeds,  
the thorny nub of crow I step on.  
Praying for grief, I say what is safe,  
a false prayer beginning Amen.

Streamlet, I cannot guess what crosses  
this off-whitened field so severely.  
Violets, chaff. The grass looks fair enough.  
The sick cow's dehydrated udder  
dips down in a buttery puddle.  
Bleary and shod, I turn home consumed,  
sixteen holes in my theory of wind.