

go over to his corner to paint. when I stooped
with the soggy meat I put each chunk
rolled up and stuck along the sides as you suggested,
stepped back to let the hideous turtles glide
out of the rushes, the last brown clouds on the water,
to swallow the flesh from the world of air,
and once getting brave put a ball of it
on the string you left, dangled it
over the place where a frog bigger
than my foot emerged, snapped it away
like a monster grabbing the
heart of a virgin from a painting,
just like you said.

Barn Fires / Peter Wild

Summers we lay awake above the sweep of the pastures
while the worms worked through the dry soil,
voices climbing chamber by chamber into the old wood
of the neighbors' barns, until they spurted
from a peak, a tuft of owl feathers
with nowhere to go but the sky,
and below at their confirmations the horses looked up,
drew their lips back at the rafters
turning to spirit, dancing with the Saint Elmo's fire
that one sees at last as a promise on a voyage.
but no matter whose it was, we got there too late,
to discover only the jaws of a tedder glowing red in a corner
among the ashes and bones, the blowing duff, the boulders
of the foundation taking their time cracking open,
just as the firemen arrived clinging to their yellow ladders
through the forest, stood in their uniforms lined up,
though next morning like prophets we had lived through our sadness,
waking to the new cows coming toward us between the hills one by one,
the women having laid out blueberry pies and cheese
on the boards, the fresh timbers leaping into place
before our hands as we moved them,
having the idea of it all the while in our heads.