wrapping our brittle bones around each other, swimming toward that music neither of us understands. Music like the jeweled clockwork of the sun-drenched dragonfly's four perfect wings that flex the light. There is no secret in that light, no matter how beautiful, how full.

Dog Years

Well, in a hundred years when an army of blind crows scratches with scarred claws in the duff at the edge of the browning woods by the river; when new grasses tough as knotted rope have grown that have never heard the historical whisper of languages and the religions spawned thereby; when old trout burn huge and muscular near the bottom of the drunken river from which lush weeds coil;

when no hammer blows fall like cold syllables in the heart of the village to ring the spring air and prick up the ears of old dogs sweltering on our porches; when our dogs twitch their fine noses at the acrid combinations of leaf smoke and the cold burnings of fungus;

when it is all over for us, even in this rural paradise



of conservative voters; when, dropped by an atrophied arm, the stainless steel pot clatters to the kitchen floor, and long after the ritual of mail delivery has ceased its comforting punctuation, and after the fine ash of incinerated trash has filmed the school windows—those who have strength will push open their doors and send out their suffering dogs.

Those dogs will glance nervously over their shoulders as they descend the sagging porch steps beside the basket of curling geraniums, wagging their tails in the wan hope

characteristic of their species (so long accustomed to the sound of our languages over their heads), but who will begin soon to fend for themselves, to form a better government, a more perfect union, with a pure code constructed of growls, more suited to the new world—*the world* of accelerated mutation that will be their inheritance. To forget us will take them less than a generation.