

LETTER WITH A BLACK BORDER

Black centipedal bugs
round the corner of a feather,
turning their bodies like silverfish—
otherwise they might be buses
disappearing down a dark street.
To them it is crow city,
pinions that may last as long as a building.

I could mail this letter there.

I was going to send you the green trees
but they were shaking.
I wanted to give you the wheat fields of Washington
but the Whitmans were massacred.
And the rattlers took everyone
the long way home.
And the squirrels ran down
like snow in spring.
All of the rivers had battles;
I wanted to send you the trees
that hid the heroes.

The wild mint sends its own purple message
on runners.

Along an elegant white rib one vermin goes
like a hearse over the bridge
in the city.

Its lights are on
but you do not know
a single one of the mourners.