

Two Poems · *Talvikki Ansel*

FILAMENTS

The woman pushes away
from the microscope, she would rather
be somewhere else than in
the laboratory. Water
collected in a gutter below
the window is sparkling.
Under the lenses, *Volvox aureus*
somersaults and splits,
sends its elegant green colonies
rolling out, to split
and roll. She has read, "*Volvox*
is like a universe
of individual stars, fixed
in an invisible firmament." She thinks
there are *Volvox* in the gutter,
in China
where her brother is. Today
in a store she saw a tiny wooden
bug in a sandalwood nut; its legs
hung loose, trembled
with the movement from little weights
attached. She hopes he is all right,
her brother. Seventy
years ago her grandmother, Ardith
Thrift, leaned over the puzzle
her father was carving; said, "I want
to make it beautiful" when
her mother asked her
what kind of dress
she would make from the cotton
brought into the swamp. The swamp
where everything is green, *Volvox*

dividing; rolling off
 the alligator's lip, through
 the cooter's belly, into Red's
 water dish. And everything
 not in water is coming
 out of water: the trees rising,
 the hummock
 where Ardith lived; the stand
 of cypress, where there was still
 an ivory bill, even the sky
 at night—darkness
 out of darkness, studded
 with stars—which the granddaughter
 now follows in the threads
 of constellations:
 the arc
 to Arcturus; big dipper
 to Polaris, the celestial pole.

FISHING

The beach rocks when he drops me off
 in the morning—and the lawn
 and my bed, when I sleep after fishing
 all night. My chest
 and stomach flat on the mattress.
 Rise and fall, like a line
 on the fathometer's spool of turning
 paper. My eyelids—I close
 my eyes and see the red glow
 of the compass in the cabin.
 When I wake, everything will be still:
 my boots at the door, the lawn
 fresh with light, upright cedars,
 horizontal stretch of sea.