

The Shape · *David Wagoner*

The seed falls, lies still through rain,
Lies covered by snow through its after-ripening,
Then swells in the lengthening days
And bursts, and the primary root
Turns down to make its way
Through the newly dead and the long dead,
And the lateral roots spread wide
To brace for the lifting-up and the opening
Of the caul-pale embryo to the light,
And the roots deepen and darken, and the stem
Hardens and stiffens and lifts higher
The first unfolding leaves and the first branches,
And the roots embrace themselves, embrace stones,
Embrace the earth that holds them, sending their dream
High into the storms of the moon and wind,
The storms of the sun and stars for years.

What falls against the mind and lies still?—
Lies covered and cold, yet ripens,
Spreads down through a wealth of the half-remembered
And the forgotten, the unknown, to a deeper darkness,
To transparent eyes, to the ends of fingers, then raises
Into a storm this branched unreasoning shape?