

Apples and Old Wood

Apples and old wood
Fruit peeled, sliced and boiled
Over blue flame for
Fifty Novembers staining
Cabinets with porcelin knobs
Strange and comfortable.

The house is old
Their stuff is old and they are old.
The fruit came in every year
From trees nearby. Apples with
Leaves and twigs and apple dirt.
These are small and dull and she
Keeps them in boxes.

The fruit brings along gray skies
And spruce and fir and the Columbia
And another family in another time.
Steam whistles, red brick and radio.
Brothers bundled under wool caps stamp into
The warm pantry. Cold fingers
Fumble buttons and she laughs with them.

I am with them returning from
A hunt along the water.
No triumph of kill, just simple
Joy at home again. We have beaten
The cold and wet and won the
Warm kitchen and apples.

Decades later the boys retired and the old
House was sold away.
In another old kitchen I am surprised by
Apples again. I am a little boy and
I can see other boys. I am with them
And we are in from the river.