

Turning Compost on Good Friday

A sheaf of last year's lavender
slimy black

my mother's fragrance
and my grandmother's

between them on fervent knees
I kept vigil

death and resurrection
both abstractions

a hawk's cry
slices the air

encrusted with blossom
the plum tree hums

after a slow dying
crumbs of compost

Earthward

Like mycelia on the forest floor
fingers of inquiry
probe me for essence:

particulate crumb,
either nutrient or toxin.
Choose.

The tallest fir falls,
offers flame to my stove
on a winter night.

Decaying, the downed wood
smells of fecundity,
shelters sowbugs.

Humility and humus
both rooted
in the word for earth.

Weeding

It is best to do it
on your knees,
in recognition that your mastery-
to choose by shape of leaf
which of the new-sprung shoots
will live
and which will die—
is transient.

Obedient to finger pinch
at the rounded nub
where stem and root
each grow their separate ways,
the doomed release their grip
on the damp earth.

It is well to pause
mid-toss
to contemplate the slender root
translucent in sunlight,
its fractal symmetry
suspended
from earth-encrusted
fingertips.