

THE GRAVEYARD OF TREES

Like rows of dead soldiers
it rises on the hill-side
I am only walking with my wife
along this snow-banked road
and unprepared for history;
first my own brief story
for I have walked here many times
and do not recall these crosses
so aligned like stumps,
the measured harmony of the hill-side;
and then another history
before the burial
when the soldiers fought —
the lily and the rose;
a passing car snaps this glory
like a flag
and I am left an intruder
amongst coniferous corpses
the deciduous dead;
whenever the battle (surely
it was after my last walk here)
the phalanx fell unbroken
beneath the carping axe —
a third history, whorled,
quiescent,
in rings of wooden flesh

— *J. A. Wainwright*