

BURLAP CURTAINS

Fibers rough to my fingers,
 Color of bleached earth, wet sand,
 Smell of the orient, oceans, a steel hull,
 Tough, honest, ugly-beautiful,
 Straining sunlight into my room,
 Resistant to the wind.

How simple a world seen through the curtains —
 Some clumsy, humped-up shapes of trees
 Against a sky that is only a brightness,
 Nuance of color, detail of leaf and branch
 All strained out
 To essentials of light and dark.

A wet cheek brushes the sympathetic folds
 As a shaking hand tenses to draw the curtain.

—*Sybil Korff Vincent*

POEM

I,
 balanced at forest edge
 full of shadows
 and sun-exploding clearing,
 listened,
 to wind-rivers in birches
 waterfalls in the pines,
 wept,
 as a leaf,
 oval, toothed,
 brown-blotched as a grandmother,
 fell upon my shoulder
 at forest edge
 as if I were yesterday's summer.

—*Marsha Mitchell*