I sit in the woods
    and watch the stream
admiring the trees as they ripple and flow
Waves sweep us in,
    lulled into dream-sleep,
    carrying us away—
    content to settle beneath the gentle caress
certain to end as we began

I listen,
voice-bodies walk by
(I ripple and flow with the trees)
They do not see me
    those on the road beyond
    gazing down at the dirt—
    into the ground—through the earth
    to the other side of the moon,
as if answers lie in darkness
They pass by
fixed in soiled thoughts
    unaware of the forest’s voice
the confusion of their black thoughts screaming
too loud to hear its whisper
blind to brilliance reflected
    on red-golden leaves,
    (the brown-yellowed shield barely allows
the honey to drip down
upon those fallen,
hidden in the webbed silence)
Yet do I realize its presence
bow down to it
recite my hymns of praise

III.
The sun rests its hand upon
the open leaves of a magical book
and scarce need the breeze brush by
to send the bound work streaming,
the black, streaking
(slowing, we reach into a bank of silver-black,
cradles gently in the stream’s arms
it follows us away)

IV.
A young man walks,
foot-falls one after another
From my gentle carriage I plead—look!
Stop and join the journey
to have these moments
with unknown endings
His thoughts blind him—
protectors of a vision
perhaps he could not bear
“How little you know
this soft mother,
this fluid compassion!
Silence the mind warriors . . .”
(but you cannot see
and I move tranquilly on
cradled in the arms of
my mother
who carried away the bank,
whose lullaby rocks the trees to sleep)

Too soon she reaches my beginning
the sun pulls on his tattered cloak,
the eccentric lover that can stay no longer,
and hastens away
with ragged ends flowing
Stream and wood modestly clothe themselves
faces darkened,
ashamed of the sun’s extravagance—
of the naked radiance they flaunted—
that he had glorified and
shown with silent pride to those of the wood
that could not but watch

How unlike the sap of trees are my tears!
It is the sun that soothes them
and bids them weep—
proudly glistening in their sorrow

I weep at his leaving,
fearing my own shrieking thoughts
in chaotic darkness.

I cling to his cloak—
brazen even in my darkened robes
But as I rave, the stream chants softly to me—
“come tomorrow, come tomorrow
and perhaps you will understand
He leaves—but is the constant lover—
I sooth by his touch
his warmth inspires my compassion
Go from the wood—
the night’s chill is on
and your robes have less substance than ours—
our textures are those of many more years
I send you away,
    but love,
    come tomorrow.”

VI.

A glow remains still—
    I sit in the wood—
    watching the wood and stream
Somewhere, far-off,
    a young man cries out
Softly I whisper,
    “Come tomorrow, my love,
    come tomorrow.”

UNTITLED

Alice Monds

He took an old Barlow knife from his pocket and eased into the cane bottom chair, tipping it back on two legs against the low stone fence. Methodically, he drew the gleaming blade across a fragrant block of red and yellow cedar. His gnarled, weathered hands moved deftly. He worked intently for some time, honing the block to a soft roundness and piling thin light curls of cedar around his feet. He peered at his companion from singular eyes set below incredibly unmanageable gray brows.
    “Mighty fine shavins, ain’t they?”
The boy nodded in agreement.
    “Knew a feller once,” the old man said, “won a whittlin’ contest. Took a big kitchen match and made such fine curled shavins, he had