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Silent Mountains

Billy Edd Wheeler

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SILENT MOUNTAINS

Billy Edd Wheeler

What it was was never much, I know
A camp, the hills—only the fallen snow
Could flatter what every other day
Saw fading bare and oily grey.
But it was home.
It was a place to go.

The noise was closer than the air it rode
From coal car and tippie—it was sewed
In the ear, as if it were a fly
Pushing against the glass and wanting by.
It ached inside
The ear. It's aching still.

It is not that I mourn my youth that's lost
Or grow weary at how the years get tossed
One on one in this fumed memory of mine.
Sad would be the word. I say be kind
To one who cannot prove
He was a boy

By pointing to a tree, a house or creek
And saying from behind a rutted cheek
"It was this world I was born into.
My father carried off this hill on his shoe
Into the house.
My mother swept it out."

Now the town itself is swept away.
The grey and crumbling houses are the whey
Of three hundred lives, as near as many broods
Who had to bide the mountain and its moods.

The mountain stands
Silent now, biding other mountains.

Reprinted from *Song of a Woods Colt*.