

## **Brown Winter**

This is the time  
when winter lets go  
but spring is slow  
to drag itself around again,  
when there's just a thin glaze  
of ice left, enough  
to crack under my boot  
and sink into the slush beneath.

This time around  
I'm trying to remember  
the different kinds of brain tumors;  
I knew them yesterday  
but not today,  
not with the sky gray like this,  
not with the hour I just lost  
to daylight-saving time.

I learned once  
that most people commit suicide  
in the spring,  
if they're going to do it,  
and I remember thinking  
that seemed about right  
though I couldn't place why.

*The Norwegians call this time*  
*'brown winter,'*  
I say to the people at a party,  
a grillout  
where someone with too much optimism  
left the sliding glass door open  
to let cold, wet air  
seep in.

I think of the woods  
I ran through that morning,  
the brown leaves  
matted together with mud,  
I think of headaches  
and round, gray masses on an MRI  
and how people with craniectomies  
look like they'd taken a gun  
to the side of their head

and survived,  
and I suppose  
when the leaves finally unfurl  
from their tight, green buds  
I'll know I survived  
this brown winter,  
too.