

banished by coyote
carried her eternally howling child
tied to her back
as they moved forever through the tree tops
mother crooning to the child
how sometimes she would swoop down in anger
scattering berries off bushes

Maggie told me I had heard
the wind woman sing
she told me that I would remember that song always
because the trees were my teacher

I remember the song clearly
but it is always Maggie's voice singing
her songs
filling my world
with the moan of old dark pines
as the wind woman
that sings to me
follows
with her hungry child
wherever I go

1978, 1991

History Lesson

Out of the belly of Christopher's ship
a mob bursts
Running in all directions
Pulling furs off animals
Shooting buffalo
Shooting each other
left and right

Father mean well
waves his makeshift wand
forgives saucer-eyed Indians

Red coated knights
gallop across the prairie

to get their men
and to build a new world

Pioneers and traders
bring gifts
Smallpox, Seagrams
and rice krispies

Civilization has reached
the promised land

Between the snap crackle pop
of smoke stacks
and multicolored rivers
swelling with flower powered zee
are farmers sowing skulls and bones
and miners
pulling from gaping holes
green paper faces
of a smiling English lady

The colossi
in which they trust
while burying
breathing forests and fields
beneath concrete and steel
stand shaking fists
waiting to mutilate
whole civilizations
ten generations at a blow

Somewhere among the remains
of skinless animals
is the termination
to a long journey
and unholy search
for the power
glimpsed in a garden
forever closed
forever lost

1979, 1991