

## A LA RECHERCHE

I know that time has passed. My hair  
is faded, and the drawers are crammed  
with old letters. The evening air  
is perfumed by other gardens, and

I sit and swipe half-heartedly  
at Dickinson's persistent fly.  
When I was no taller than this sea  
of flowers, there was a bright green sky

above a rainbow-spattered view;  
it was a town of flowers. That truth,  
now the field is underfoot,  
is gone with the girl I was and her youth.

Yet though the woods have grown back through  
the cast-off harrow, and a tree  
now drives the wagon, stone walls hew  
these woods to fields of former years.

A vanished glacier plucked the front  
from hills and drew the valley's face.  
It is here and not here. Hunt  
for it; it is in a special place.

The past and the future are borne in the hour;  
those who know when they will die  
just have less future in them – for  
you can't step in the same high

water twice, but you can again.  
When my arms are full of light,  
I can feel instead a warm, round hen,  
sleek silky feathers stuffed with life,

with beating and clucking, this ball of meat  
bursting with life and eggs. My fingers  
in the sun are full of a neat  
brown piece of pretty life that lingers,  
having perished these fifty years.  
(They say the science of the soul  
is the new faith; what drives our tears  
is never lost, just cubbyholed.  
The fallacy was to determine

what should be recalled at last;  
the flow of trends secures their preferment.)  
Now a dark horse canters past

the flower's tropism, in and out  
of seasons, under bare branches bathed  
in rosy light and hung about  
with tinkling crystals, through a swathe

fragrant with hay, the footfalls soft  
upon fields of childhood's vanished farm  
and down the broad green valley of far-off  
school days, clattering over the charmed

pavements of towering cities, a babble  
of tongues on the air, whispering like wind.  
There falls a stillness after the rabble  
of clamorous scenes and stories, skin

cooled as the gravel road underfoot  
rises, dips and winds among  
the heavy-shouldered boulders, brutes  
asleep on the floor of the forest, flung

by the genius of the ice, playing  
a game of statues. The soft mane  
brushes the backs of my hands, swaying  
in cadence with hoofbeats measured refrain,

pounding out numbers, blood keeping time,  
its song in my ears as the light fades;  
the rider aware alone of the ride  
gallops on among the gathering shades.