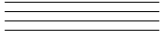


C L O U D S A N D M O O N



M A R G A R E T G I B S O N

Today there are clouds and deep puddles
the color of coffee in the dirt road.
For breakfast, an orange. Toast, with
butter and Gillian's homemade marmalade.
I practice sounding English like her,
I don't know why. Daffodils are up,
I wander lonely as a cloud. I remember
a friend and his melancholy. Wonder
if it's catching. Wonder, if I feel it
fully, will I find the gift sadness cloaks?
I brush my hair; I brush it again, try
a different barrette to hold it. Forget that —
I shake out my hair. *Who can stay still?*
Which is the way to Mount Wutai?
I go outside with the dead English poets
and the crazy cloud Chinese, and I walk.
In the night the brook has washed over
the road in a great slur of mud and leaves.
I admire the fact of natural forces. I admire
each one of the sodden sticks I yank
from the leafy roil left behind in the road.
The more sturdy ones I fling into the brook
to see how fast they flush with the torrent.
Most I place to the side of the road
in a bundle so tidy it resembles kindling
someone will return for. I study

my empty hands. By now, it's afternoon,
how did that happen? Here it is,
my whole life a continuous upwelling
I can't catch or hold. The bottom
falls out of the bucket, the moon flows through.