

## Stump, Lake House

The dogwood nearly dead, you chainsaw  
the trunk and sick branches clawing  
at the winter sky. The stump has to be dug  
out by hand, split then mauled into bits.  
Nothing even to salvage for firewood, you  
shovel the whole mess into the slough. You  
return to the kitchen, flushed from the work,  
your jacket loose in one hand. I see you  
thinking *no more trouble from that tree* as you  
look back at the space your task has made  
clear. And I wonder exactly what danger  
we were ever in, what threat the last gasp  
of a dead dogwood might ever pose. You  
step toward me, smiling, what threat indeed.