

Milk Flowers

Given to the winter light again
of a century that casts us all as late.

Legs spindle as the shadows lengthen,
giants splayed across the blasted hills.

So much we thought to have and know
has slipped through our fingers.

So much careful husbandry
lost for decades to the earth.

The fields are shuttered; trees broken.
Here and there patches of stubborn snow.

Birds are silent in the branches.
Old leaves, the smell of smoke.

And I'm so afraid for anything small
and hopeful, anything starting out.

But hope he knew his milk flowers
would split the crust of history,

rise through snow and blight and war rise singing:
merlin, magnet, merlin, magnet, merlin.