

Transit

Someone is waiting for us,
Down through that grove of ferns
Growing low to the ground and dappled with rust.
Will we reach him before the season turns

Its back? Someone is waiting for us,
With his heart in his fist for warmth,
Down through that grove of trampled ferns.
I cannot say whether it is death,

With his heart in his fist for warmth
And eyes that blink back a simple love.
I cannot say for sure whether death
Is whom I see. It is so far from here, the grove.

The leaves glisten with a simple love
Of the season, which shifts now, slowly, to the east.
Who is it I see so far from here? The grove
Is but a speck, a tick on the back of a beast.

And the season shifts now slowly to the east
Where whatever must begin begins.
We wait like ticks on some beast
Not yet born, not yet risen on its limbs,

Though whatever must begin already begins.
Will we make it? Will we arrive and speak
To those many not yet risen to their limbs—
The cradled, the grief-bent, the meek?

Some will make it. Some will live to speak,
Will stand upon the ground, shirts weeping rust
Like birds some wicked boys have reached.
Someone, believe me, someone is waiting for us.

Tracy K. Smith