

garage

he has hoisted another
heavy bag
using rope
instead of chain

preferring that certain creak
of wooden joists
and rafters straining
to the sudden jolt of a punch
or elbow or kick

he's been visualizing
his next fight

the concentrated double jab
the spinning backfist
the footwork and evasive movements
the digging
fist or flying knee

he's prepared to rise
from a wooden stool
round after round

sucking in blood and air
with the sting of a cut lip
or smashed nose

with the phantom smell
of damp earth among boulders

or with the swelling mass
wanting to knot and close
above an eye

when he steps outside
for fresh air
his attention drifts into the stars

he's training for something
beyond his comprehension

he's certain it isn't something
as mundane as a fight

although it is a fight

from *Root of Lightning*