

## The Aspen People

The heavy early snow that came  
when leaves were green  
bent willows and alders to earth,  
broke the waistlets of yellow pine,  
but worse, snapped in half  
the plummy aspens near the roadside.

Ascetic. Thin and resonant,  
thus, tragic. What we mean essentially  
when we say someone is *too sensitive*.  
They fall through air. They crack.  
Leaving the hours open without plan.

Leaves click and murmur below me  
like pebbles on shore when the outgoing tide  
passes through them, reminding me  
that air is fluid.  
I can wipe it across my cheeks,  
anointed with dust as I was as a girl.

This is not a life of quiet correspondences.  
Not the life we thought we were here to live.  
But it survives, a step behind us.  
Two shining cups, though three have spilled.