

On my May walk, I pass Frost  
Farm. Maine sassafras leaves,  
fairer than summer, tender, pulled  
and chewed. The abandoned home-

stead – empty can, serrated edge  
pondered against a wrist. My teeth  
are green with walking. I pass wild  
asparagus, smear mud bear prints

into shoe. I stop beside a wispy hunk  
of skin caught on barbed-wire rust.  
Young men hooked on fences,  
my breath in gaps between bone.

In my life I've seen queer things  
moving, shadows of outstretched  
ribs. Sons, old friends, the cattle –  
scraped from muscle. I push a gate,

swinging, take the light-haired patch  
from wire, let animals pass through –  
as if they are alive. The skin is not a cow.  
I name it Matthew. The white-tailed

deer jumps and misses the mark.  
The dead dog hunts for what yanked  
loose from skin. Burned closet full of  
clothes, I wear a spotted wrinkle on dying

hand. A quiet breathing blows beyond  
the fence as fiddleheads unwind to fern.  
I kiss the hide. Listen. High-pitched  
calls, boys that left the farm.