

Three Poems

JEN

the birch splits
its bark
the snake its skin
the child leaps
into the woman
she always has been

nothing is new
nothing is changing
the birch is the bark
the snake the skin
the child the woman

the seed, flowering
dies back into the earth
as the child, growing,
turns forward
toward her new birth

TO JOSH TURNING SIX

1.

the loon fishing
quietly swallows itself
into the lake

2.

going simple
you have now
more than you will
ever need to use

3.

the morning rain
gathers
onto the apple bud
only to fall
of its own weight

4.

going clear
knowing you gain
exactly what you need
to lose

TO JOSH AND DAVID: TURNING THIRTEEN

If we were
ancient shamans
now would be
the moment
we'd choose
to give you
shelter
from the coming
storm

But we are merely
survivors
of suburbs and cities
not forest nor mountain:
Modern men
offering
silence and words
to guide you
going out
on your own

Yet we have known
for years now
that the silence
of our fathers
will not do

And yes, we have also known
that words alone
cannot become
the sacred knives
you need
to bleed you free
of raging doubts

So listen up
to what we
have learned
from the silence
found
between words:

Open up your fists

Watch women move

Scorn uniforms

Don't march

Dance

—DOUG RAWLINGS

