

The Long Road

we cannot lie on our back
we cannot stretch our legs and our arms
we cannot show our soft-white belly to the red hot sun
we cannot lie on our back
how, we ask —
is a long road measured?
does the marrow of the rock say
does the soil, pierced by the blade of the plough say
as it peels and rolls
as it tears
as it ripens into a wound that must receive a seed
does it say anything
with its agreeable whispers
as the blade cuts, and as it turns and rolls
the distance that measures the ability to wait —
for the seed
does the soil say anything?

the sun sings with heat here
we cannot show our soft-white belly to the sun
the sun has teeth.

how is a long road measured

when the seasons
like a woman in love ask
through their eyes and face
through the tips of their fingers
as soft as a day old baby's flesh — they ask:
if love is so bare, what care do you have?

the seasons are strong
they mount time
they mount tops of trees
the seasons mount the sun and the moon
and ask
how is a long road measured?
the rumble of cattle hooves flow to the river
the river floods and flows
plants whistle through the soil

a man bare feet
red soiled clothes
and a heart, harder than a rail track
reads the sun and the river
and picks up a gun.

how, how is a long road measured?

if like the seasons
you have come and left
and come again

how is a long road measured

if the scars of your body
like soil receives the plough blade every season
begin to itch with expectation

how we ask, is a long road measured?

we will not lie on our back
and like a seedling of an aloe
solomon emerges
with horns as bright as the sun rays,
the silence here is very familiar now.