

Joann Gardner

Norway

A knock on the door invites answers Outdoors
click-drift fishing boats fords

Slice of salmon dark brew Elk travel on crisp hooves
Our favorite flavor Tang

Flame in the belly Woolen hands friendly The rough
cut and the gentle steam rising The secret lip of sea

Risk everything long winter nights the bright
displays sound heaves on the frozen tundra water
Lillehammer

And in this country a message near the door how one
must make the long retreat alone Gather up the children
wrap them in fur Quick as the stars and no notion
of where they would come from but certain
as the seasons they would come

Got to flee Got to get out of here Got to jump quick
(gotcha Batya) Take something for the journey
a book of names collection of coins light-growing
lantern leading us to that jagged shore wooden
boat waves pounding

Let's say we know how it feels everything forgetting
words like a curse or a grumble cold They took what
we had our hopes our homes sobbed with regret
even before we left the harbor

Planet waves seeking a landed miracle Mother and son
a distant reminder warming their hands by the fire

Let's peel potatoes break bread think sing sip tea
loggy-headed light the lamp "What do you want
from the old house?" her mother asked "Not a thing"
she replied and meant it "Let's rest then Yes"
on the wooly surface on goose ticking glad and they did.