

Rain

When we moved
into the old house
in Whitney
rain
came right in
and shook our hands
We took it outside again
in pans
picked up from where
we put empty pans
to replace

Days stayed warm
Rainless
weeks at a time
Leaking roofs
didn't matter
but we knew
vagaries
of mountain weather
fall and winter changes

Flammable
dry cedar shingles
of the roof
concerned me more
than
uninvited rain
into our house.

I kept after John
my boss, the owner
thinks a long time
before spending money
good guy though

He sent Andy up to fix the roof
I worked with Andy
autumn on us by then
we'd cut the hay
contractors baled it

hauled it down the river road
to John and Mike's home ranch

We laddered up
stripped off wooden shingles, old paper
laid new tar paper, new metal
cut and fit
drilled and hammered

finished, loaded tools
leftover materials
Snow fell
and stayed
but we were warm
in a dry house
fires hot
in stoves we installed
smoke
out through exhaust systems
we built
or changed as needed

Quick-to-burn dry wood
that formed our house
occupied my mind

I prowled the house
cold nights
checked every exhaust
double-checked our safety
wrote and sang til morning
slept until noon
my family active around me
in our warm, small house

Rain and snow
wind and sub-zero
stayed outside
looked in at us
through windows
that were there
and new ones we built
for the back room.

We stayed dry
warm

Cried too
Yes. Does anyone
leave that totally
in this material world

but
joyfully
happy
Laughed
Loved
Wrote
Drew
Read
Read to each other
Slept
Ate
Lived