

POPLARS

Michael Pfeifer

after Claude Monet

1.

Without the full stroke of light yet
the poplars stiffen.
Like stubborn flames
or pockets of water
they sink
into blue loops.
Without some reconciliation
they could become even darker,
the river more distant,
more foreign in method,
like the cold wave of the river
spreading into four lines
that reach for the boat.

2.

The leaves try for one more gesture
at noon, grow bright, thin,
and then curl in the light
like messengers with responsibilities
but without language.

3.

The stubborn house
we have been waiting on,
the sun, finally explodes
and burns for an instant,
every bitter color
consumed in the open air.
The boat nudged by heat,
by the short swells of grass and flowers
on the bank.
Like a thin layer of wind
that passes completely
through the open body.