Rhododendrons

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RHODODENDRONS

Like porches they trust their attachments, or seem to, the road and the trees leaving them open from both sides. I have admired their spirit, wild-headed women of the roadside, how exclusion is only something glimpsed, the locomotive dream that learns to go on without caring for the landscape.

There is a spine in the soil I have not praised enough: its underhair of surface clawed to the air. Elsewhere each shore recommends an ease of boats, shoulders nodding over salmon who cross this sky with our faces.

I was justifying my confusion the last time we walked this way. I think I said some survivals need a forest. But it was only the sound of knowing. Assumptions about roots put down like a deeper foot seemed dangerous too.

These were flowers you did not cut, iris and mums a kindness enough. Some idea of relative dignities, I suppose, let us spare each other; I came away with your secret consent and this lets you stand like a grief telling itself over and over.

Even grief has instructions, like the boats gathering light from the water and the separate extensions of the roots. So remembering is only one more way of being alone when the voice has gone everywhere in the dusk of the porches looking for the last thing to say.