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## Days of Prophecy

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## Days of Prophecy

It is wonderful how trees  
spill blood and fire, losing  
their bellies in fall,  
straining the road I drive north  
to Mount Vernon:  
past Ace Hardware where the day's special  
is a thirty-foot extension  
ladder guaranteed to reach  
so damn high it'll make your nose bleed;  
at Ben Franklin's five-and-dime  
I stop at a red light  
and a half-naked mannequin  
in the window, eyes wide,  
points to the reddening  
sky behind me, nails stung crimson,  
hands twisted like branches;  
past Quick-Mart and Mt. Vernon Academy,  
past the Seventh Day Adventist  
Church-on-the-Hill  
where a neon wagon board lists the weekly  
special: These Are Days of Prophecy,  
as if all the blood and fire of Armageddon  
hadn't already filled the street bridle-high,  
leaves slapping the hood  
of my car, licking the windows  
with scarlet tongues; I duck  
as I drive through dying forests,  
past houses, junk  
piled onto their porches and lawns  
and driveways: no one  
in sight; I disappear  
in a river of red and orange  
past shorn fields and smitten creeks  
choked with red clay;  
past a forgotten vessel,  
dry-docked in a meadow  
buoyed by pampas grass and cattails,  
saw grass cut up through the hull,  
ivy cleaving to the cabin; I pull  
to the side to wade knee-deep  
through the grass and thistles  
to lay my hands on  
its belly, to run over the rough planks  
to the stern to feel its shallow pulse;  
from between the loose ribs jumps a fox  
I see behind him a tanager's nest  
nestled in the bosom, blood red  
feathers dripping between planks  
covering my feet as they fall.

– Trey Dunham '94