

1982

Experience

Barry Paillet
Denison University

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Experience

When you've risen before the sun
Burns droplets from the stalks,
And paced across frigid planks
To stoke Survival.

When you've gathered milk
From a fist of warm flesh,
Pumped the shivering steel
For a crisp gulp of water,
And splintered logs
With a rusted tool
Between throbbing hands
So that you might eat.

When you've leaned heavily
On those you hardly know,
Acquired full boots of snow
Trudging a heaped sled of supplies,
Trekking miles after midnight
To embrace the day's slumber.

When you've trod deeply in my footprints,
You may clench my heart
and voice what you feel
Between your tingling fingers.

Barry Paillet