

Before Our First Frost

winter sun caresses madrona's flushed
coral green inner bark
whose graceful old burnt sienna skin
curls earth like leaves
Crows caw change
Small birds skitter singing
alert our spirits
to live for an unexpected rainbow over
a jangled end of city street
for a lone autumn rose unopened pink
for this silent breath of cedars
As I walk through these woods
each shadow is your cherished voice
which held me for a moment
in this stiff agony of our days
echoed in a snag whose bleached trunk
of bare broken branches
leans into some coming wind storm
This tender moss under my feet
is a nest of brilliant viridian feathers
delicately comforting you
Give our sorrow
to that old snake of time
shedding shedding



*In memory of Terri Jewell
Winter 1995*

by Chrystos