

UNLEAVING

RUTH THOMPSON

Years and years I've come to you
like this – sliding in to touch base,
dirt in my teeth.

Years and years I've leaned against you,
breathing. Green skin, sap-stuck,
fissured as mine is now.

You wore willow
and I climbed up weeping.
You put on god tree when I needed gods.

Still, it's strange to find you waiting,
back here where we began.
Years and years round to the smell

of dust and tannin – as if this life
I've made so much of
were nothing but a squirrel's

flimflam. Once I fell
through a vortex of spinning
aspen leaves.

It's taken me a lifetime
to know the place
for home.