

DEBORAH PURDY

At the Approach of Winter

a dream
is an imaginary

quick hot scent and taste
of nothing but roots and leaves,

serpents and vipers,
stings of a scorpion—

bitter things
a spoonful at a time

burnt to ashes
in a glass jar.

Your grief
is a sovereign wound.

ABOUT THE POEM

“At the Approach of Winter” was created from the *Complete Herbal* by Nicholas Culpeper (1653).
About the poem and the process of composing it, Deborah Purdy writes:

I read through the *Complete Herbal* and compiled a selection of linguistically interesting or potentially useful words and phrases to create a word/phrase bank of possible lines for the poem. Next, I went through the word/phrase bank to find lines and phrases that seemed to work well together and that fit the theme of the poem.

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