

# *Totentanz*

I suppose it was more poetic in our heads:  
It's been eleven months, and by the time we came here  
The squash already were rotting in the field. We watched  
Fog and fire infect our neighbor's mountain, burned  
A cord of apple wood, cut and dried behind  
The furnace for a week just to keep us almost warm. All winter  
Our pillows stank of wood smoke and the soot  
Beneath your nails turned the bread dough black.

I suppose there was that morning you found a fairy ring  
Of wild mushrooms, and in middle made gaunt gnomons  
Of our torsos—but yesterday I mowed over six of them almost  
Without noticing. And there was something just a little morbid  
In the way we spent our Sundays, almost religiously,  
Deciphering those depression recipes  
The last tenant scrawled auf Deutsch before  
She died inside the room where we undress each other

With our eyes (It's been just a bit too cold for nakedness). My dear,  
I suppose if I'd not cut up apple wood; instead  
If it was quince wood (Pliny called quince the golden apple), perhaps  
You still would doubt and I'd deny the hair's breadth difference  
Between our living simply out here,  
And simply living. We might have flayed the branches  
Into barrels, made gold wine from the fruit, and had some left still  
To burn, and some to build.

*Mitchell Storar*