

A Note to Hayden Carruth from Miami  
by John Balaban

Here, where orchids scent our evenings  
and the sapodilla drops its spotted fruit,  
gray, gritty, sweet, I raise a glass  
of the "poet's cheap, sufficient chardonnay"  
and salute your freezing northern lights,  
  
your days in the muddy slop of springtime  
when trillium unfurls its delicate tongue,  
where skunk cabbage unwinds in the icy bog,  
and bleeding heart trembles in Isabel's garden.  
  
We've never met and probably never will  
  
except in the imagined land of green things  
beyond your daughter's death, beyond folly,  
beyond fame, beyond indignation and pain,  
toasting the first life in small things  
fresh from the earth with their tentative yes.