

**De rerum rusticae**

*Enough, more than enough your great benignity  
- Horace (Epode 1)*

Up in the cold and dark again, coughing up phlegm and snot,  
spitting out what I know would be if there were more light  
a thick, yellow-brown slime ornamented with flecks of red.

Certain muscles connected to the spine reluctantly stretching as I bend  
to light the fire with last night's accumulated tissue  
then, outside, the ground slippery with frozen drizzle,  
damn near impossible to walk to a decent pissing place,

becoming aware as I stand in the gray twilight watching the sun open  
a wound in the underbelly of clouds over the mountains to the east  
that the owls have stopped calling the coyotes yipping so  
the loudest thing here now my own expectoration.