

Fred Wah / FIVE POEMS

breathing in the water so much a breath
to make a time times so simple rhythm
early snow mountain peaks body hair finger-
nails the death past 54 measure know
nothing rotten smell histories it like
layers of froth the scarlet letters parts
of our genitals my breathing in the pool
lengths stretched father's parts out

my father hurt-
ing at the table
sitting hurting
at suppertime
deep inside very
far down inside
because I can't stand the ginger
in the beef and greens
he cooked for us tonight
and years later tonight
that look on his face
appears now on mine
my children
my food
their food
my father
their father
me mine
the father
very far
very very far
inside

father it is fall
the leaves turn
the hills
wait for winter again
the river and the town
the cars
reflect the sunlight
movement is in holding
bodies with the years
I am over forty now
they took down the Diamond Grill sign
mother has returned from China

time
is an interference
with work
 music
has shape (splitting birch this weekend)

father
again it is another season
the turning of it all
the spin
is sound
yet soundless at the core
to say this to you is nothing now
nothing
yet

the father grandfather
lineal
grampa's smile
your walk his
smile

the grampa
eyes
your brown
eyes your
serious dark
brow

my shoulders
his watch
your ring
him
thinking me
about this
all of this
all of it
thinking

lineal
face, body
a hemis-
phere

when you die it snows
late september mountain peaks

every time it happens, I see it
and I think of you then

your sister Ethel
she says white is unlucky

it snowed today at timberline
it's never very far away is it

each year
your death makes more sense to me

I can feel more of you in it now