

Patricia Corbus

Along Glassy Creek

It shows up most in February,
 crisp as April never was, a mask
 of flattery in the snow. Don't ask

about what cannot march or bury
 itself in straw, crusted with rust
 and turpentine, darkly fussed

with rime. It never comes slowly,
 but pokes its head out of a burrow,
 a Private suddenly released on furlough,

and levels its lusterless eyes coolly
 on my tight face, as if to announce
 that it is oh-so-free to even accounts

whenever it chooses — though never in August,
 leaning sideways, one shucked stalk
 stuck in blown haze. It is a lock

of hair, whipped in the eyes, a rock tossed
 to the top of the spring, bubbling lace —
 the wavering palace of your face.