

## The Tollund Man

I

Some day I will go to Aarhus  
To see his peat-brown head,  
The mild pods of his eye-lids,  
His pointed skin cap.

In the flat country near by  
Where they dug him out,  
His last gruel of winter seeds  
Caked in his stomach,

Naked except for  
The cap, noose and girdle,  
I will stand a long time.  
Bridegroom to the goddess,

She tightened her torc on him  
And opened her fen,  
Those dark juices working  
Him to a saint's kept body,

Trove of the turfcutters'  
Honeycombed workings.  
Now his stained face  
Reposes at Aarhus.

II

I could risk blasphemy,  
Consecrate the cauldron bog  
Our holy ground and pray  
Him to make germinate

The scattered, ambushed  
Flesh of labourers,  
Stockinged corpses  
Laid out in the farmyards,

Tell-tale skin and teeth  
Flecking the sleepers  
Of four young brothers, trailed  
For miles along the lines

.III

Something of his sad freedom  
As he rode the tumbril  
Should come to me, driving,  
Saying the names

Tollund, Grauballe, Nebelgard,  
Watching the pointing hands  
Of country people,  
Not knowing their tongue.

Out here in Jutland  
In the old man-killing parishes  
I will feel lost,  
Unhappy and at home.

from *Wintering Out*, 1972