

Bearded Iris

To you I gave the leftover places
with no thought of light or shade.
And when I tore your brown parts off,
it was only for looks, not for any gardener's purpose.

Through hot days, all I knew
were your razored leaves
and your gnarled rhizomes
poking like bones from cracked soil.

I planted and divided
only from reluctance to waste any gift,
no matter how carelessly bestowed.

Yet in this second winter,
you give more than ambivalence deserves:

Again and again, in the rain and fog,
your purple sepals curve back ardently,
while royal standards, erect and tall,
arch over where we begin.