

## Northern Tour

Donald M. Hassler

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“great-rooted blossomer”  
—William Butler Yeats, “Among School Children”

A workshop works like yeast. We burst  
From underneath. The poem by Yeats  
With the blossomer firmly rooted  
Always makes my classes laugh. I teach  
The best I can to silent heads.  
The jester sweats. The motley hand  
Still is in the game. The cap and bells  
Amuse. But I need the growing season,  
The shortened northern tour away from reason.

Greg Brown and his guitar came by in June.  
Now it's only black flies. News has slowed.  
They say that Alice cannot remember. Her sons  
And daughters care. The miner we call Bear  
Is son to a pillar of a man whose father

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Was more a legend. Families gather like the fifties.  
Birth is usually the same. We ought never pause  
Nor interrupt our aging to complain.  
Making hay suffices as the seasons wane.

In winter we drop our lines deep  
As football fields and jig the calluses  
On fingers made sensitive to feel  
The least pull. Sometimes we feed all year  
On worlds beneath thick ice and save  
The finite quantity of words vouchsafed  
For formal times, for ceremonies, feasts  
And gatherings when we may sing  
And write up all that rooted mix may bring.