

MARK BURKE

When the Days are Small

November's meager daylight
seeps through the doorway
into the barn's dark shell
and I hear the wind insist,
whistling along the eaves.
The snow line has eased
down the mountainside
marking the advent of cold.
Sheep file inside,
inspect the corners,
and we stand together
as the horse steps in
by degrees, cautious.
He comes and touches
his nose to my chest
and the sheep follow the old ewe
into the front stall where
they stand, out of the wind.
When winter closes in,
there will be no other place for me
to come for this comfort.