Stone Canyon Nocturne

By Charles Wright

Ancient of Days, old friend, no one believes you’ll come back.
   No one believes in his own life anymore.

The moon, like a dead heart, cold and unstartable, hangs by a thread
   At the earth’s edge,
   Unfaithful at last, splotching the ferns and the pink shrubs.

In the other world, children undo the knots in their tally strings.
   They sing songs, and their fingers blear.

And here, where the swan hums in his socket, where bloodroot
   And belladonna insist on our comforting,
   Where the fox in the canyon wall empties our hands, ecstatic for more,

Like a bead of clear oil the Healer revolves through the night wind,
   Part eye, part tear, unwilling to recognize us.


Source: Country Music: Selected Early Poems (Wesleyan University Press, 1982)