Hayden Carruth was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, and was educated at the University of North Carolina and the University of Chicago. He taught at Syracuse University for many years and worked for several literary magazines, including as the editor of Poetry magazine. He published over thirty books of poetry and criticism, and was awarded several top prizes. Much of his poetry, including "The Bearer," is set in Northern Vermont, a setting with which Carruth often mixes his radical political beliefs. He frequently combined rural life with verbal resourcefulness, strongly influenced by jazz and blues music.