

THREE POEMS
from The Deerfield Series: Strength of Heart



Peter Fallon

BLOODY BROOK

Eastwards the Pale.
Westwards scowls
a thicket, crouched
hinterlands, abode of owls

1675

the whole way to the Hudson.
September light transmutes
leaf and vine, and they
who count among the fruits

and profits of the place
fresh water and wild grapes
dally a while
as a train of grain carts scrapes

behind, the "flower of Essex county",
Capt. Lathrop's choice brigade,
at ease until enticed
into an ambushade

of Indians who, as if
in broken English, mistook,
and blushed, and changed
the name of the Muddy Brook.

BIRCHES

Shadows cross
the road;
a row of birches:
barcode.

THE BURYING GROUND: ALBANY ROAD

The voices of stone makers continue to resound.
Listen now. Before it was first woken
down, down in the burying ground

quiet became silence, was dumbfound.
Ages' sorrow and heart's strength betoken
the tones of other voices which resound.

Like ice on a spoor by the memorial mound
the topsoil's harder healed nor broken
anywhere in a burying ground.

For centuries the elders were renowned
for knowing the saved lives' token
was their name passed on to resound

after their entry, run aground,
in the pined, birched, and oaken
grove on Albany Road: the burying ground.

Born to be hanged you'll never be drowned.
Our names are called in the outspoken
voices of hosts as they resound
down, down in the burying ground.