Brown Winter

This is the time
when winter lets go
but spring is slow
to drag itself around again,
when there's just a thin glaze
of ice left, enough
to crack under my boot
and sink into the slush beneath.

This time around
I'm trying to remember
the different kinds of brain tumors;
I knew them yesterday
but not today,
not with the sky gray like this,
not with the hour I just lost
to daylight-saving time.

I learned once
that most people commit suicide
in the spring,
if they're going to do it,
and I remember thinking
that seemed about right
though I couldn't place why.

The Norwegians call this time
‘brown winter,’
I say to the people at a party,
a grillout
where someone with too much optimism
left the sliding glass door open
to let cold, wet air
seep in.

I think of the woods
I ran through that morning,
the brown leaves
matted together with mud,
I think of headaches
and round, gray masses on an MRI
and how people with craniectomies
look like they'd taken a gun
to the side of their head
and survived,
and I suppose
when the leaves finally unfurl
from their tight, green buds
I'll know I survived
this brown winter,
too.