

Some Seeds

TERRY OFNER

Some like those of the mulberry,
must pass through the gullet of a bird
to germinate. Some must lie for months
in the cold under snow. Some must burn.

To save Nineveh, Jonah had to run away,
hide on a ship bound for Tarshish,
sleep, plunge into that dream-like sea,
and wake up in the suburb of the city.

Such a fine city, with a hundred thousand
people, none knowing their right hand
from their left, and many heads of cattle,
soon, nonetheless, to be sacked.

Oh, Nineveh, up the Tigris from Bagdad.
Oh, Babylon. What dark, what sleep, what fire?
What seed doth sprout in your heart of hearts?
What tree will bear fruit on your banks?