

# The Night We Talk

for Marlene

*Wes Hempel*

When I leave you  
I look at everything  
the earth that is there  
with its blue snail  
and sticks

the pools of light on the walk  
as if it had just rained

You made a world out of clouds  
because that is what you found  
in your hands  
in the silent country  
where you were born

We do not go home  
you said our fathers lived before us  
their hands in the bread drawer  
What do they know of this hunger

The air moves where I am going  
past streetlamps on corners  
I no longer wait for a shoe  
to climb into  
slowly over grass  
my feet take me

I know where I have been  
We have names for variations  
in the thickness of mist  
the length of silences

We have come to love  
small steps  
the solid sticks  
our slow hands building