

Carol Ellis

## In the '50s

Wigwam burners lit the night in small towns scattered  
along back roads where log trucks hurtled down slopes.  
A whole forest was cut, old-growth Douglas fir stripped and loaded,  
dumped in millponds to wait. The nights were loud with saws  
and the shouts of men, old mill hands deaf from it.

Whole towns emptied when the trees were gone,  
the hills a bare brown. We imagined continuance, some hope  
of renewal, wild trees grown like corn. With a certain innocence,  
strong men who loved the forest worked to destroy it.

We didn't know then about the trees and climate and the warming  
earth. Now, as though buried in dream, we see the hills stripped  
again.

They take them out by night, long trains piled with thin Douglas fir.  
I sit in darkness at the crossing, counting cars.