

Bill Siverly

Cochran

Where the town of Cochran stood
Out on Cochran Road among the stumps and alders—
Today a vacant roadside, rusty oil drums,
A clump of alien daffodils.

The town, a glorified logging camp,
Complete with Wheeler Company mill,
Established no foundations to survive
The Tillamook Burn of nineteen thirty-nine.

At summit above the Salmonberry decline,
The Cochran water tower and station house
Stayed on a few years after the Burn,
Then left an empty sidetrack in the rain.

Scrub jays, sword ferns, salal, red currants,
And Douglas fir, the weed of trees,
Casually reclaim the land we thought was ours,
Resource without end.

The age of oil runs down,
And everything we thought would last
Rushes after it like smoke,
As ancient ways of living return to the dark Nehalem.