



Stephan Walke

Still - Life

I found a frozen garter snake
walking west on the old rail bed
that gravel scar cutting field and forest
bordered by wild apple and hawthorn

and there the snake lay
yellow eyes of open glass
frozen blades of grass declared green
reaching through the first white of winter's claim

and I held the snake
with sad, lonely fear
its archaic scales halted by a spell
like the still, hard river below

with head raised and mouth open
like a fossilized ghost of Pompeii
its figure lay poised, arrested
caught in the act of living