

MURRAY REISS

HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

I step out for a handful
of kindling and a deer startles
into the salal. The parrot

brushed with gaudy colours
inched down the branching dream
to reproach me with clown-smudged eyes.

When the caterpillars covered
spring's branches
we knew wasps would follow.

The early breakfast gossip at Barb's
turns again and again to sleep;
not who's sleeping with who but
who is *sleeping*: nobody's getting enough.

Each vineyard courts disaster, invites
its own demise. Our prayer flags hang
unmuttered, the wisteria pruned
back to a nub.

We all want to hide our heads
in a rain cloud, pull the fog down
over our eyes. I pull my light box
out of a closet and pretend

I plug in the sun.