
JAY WRIGHT

A Month in the Country

I needed to see myself again,
to get up in this air,
out of New York's fat-fried summer,
away from the clacking expertise
of all the doom sellers. 5

You offered me this house in New Hampshire.

Coming up,
your headlights teaching
me the leisured curves
of your private road, 10

the wakened trees throw on
their motley robes, line
the paths to sniff curiously
at my curious entrance;

the birds I cannot name 15
protest in their polyglot tongues;
the chipmunks dart for the lush
caves behind the barn and house.

The lights in the open port
look out, snarling at 20
the sour darkness around them.

But I am pleased.

This is just the right mile from town,
the right solitary ring on the party line.
Alone here, I can get beyond my loneliness. 25

Now, at night
the house chatters, while the wind
whips up those unplaced sounds
over the hills. I lie uneasily
in the drone of silence, afraid 30

that someone will steal the saw,
or the wood, or burn the barn,
or beat me for the riches I haven't got.
I lie, mocked by unfinished poems,
turning in Harlem's heat and closeness, 35
even here. Even here, twisting under
the weight of those disappointed voices.