

Margaret Gibson

an excerpt of

Mandala on a Walking Stick

Take an aerial view, whispers the hidden oriole I call Tu Fu.

Petals are flying, and in the sharp wind over wetlands and fields,
even here,
the cries of the markets and killing fields reach me.

Light, too light in my hand, the stick, with its dry rot, won't bear
my weight long.

Three hand-spans below

its summit, a round fungus has flared, rings of color,
buff and sienna, orbit after orbit
whirling, like the moon.

The circle without blemish, Tu Fu said—

and meant the full moon, also spilling on the surface of the brook,
never still.

I turn the stick and find,

there on the opposite side of the fungus, the dark of the moon—
a ruined world, a globe burnt out,
a corpse upon the road of night.

High up where the wind hawk hovers, glides again, and hovers—it is all one
sigh of wind.