

Companion Poems

Chicory

Till the great darkness gathers them in
some time in the quiet after us
they have a secret life of their own
down there near the ground, and they will go on
like those things you don't say
when someone interrupts and you
told them once, so you stop. In that long
interval those blue flowers begin to report.

Every night under my pillow the earth ticks
while somewhere in the distant country tomorrow
wanders looking for me, and every morning
I go out and pat the ground again. Already
that comet with destiny in it has come by
a few times, but the years are still friendly.

Certain blue flowers hold on, hold on.

--William Stafford

The Coneflower

But it's beautiful, you said,
taking the wild coneflower
you'd found in a ditch

among loosestrife and thistles,
cockleburs and dock,
and centering it in a milk glass vase

full of baby's breath,
alyssum, and purple live-for-ever—
the flower you brought out of the country

gracing your cancer-drug table,
stalk-tough, its head up
in its season a star of survival.

--Don Welch