

# Yggdrasill

(The Universal Ash of Norse mythology)

Rob Crouch

My dear, old skeleton  
climbing agelessly  
beyond the ground  
from which you sprang,  
reaching beyond the limits of this earth  
that defines your existence,  
how do you stand,  
patiently enduring  
the persecution of death's  
icepick probing your being,  
dismembering the love  
that embraces the sky?  
Why do you persist?  
From where do you draw your strength?  
The northern boreal  
stripped your spirit  
of the drapery  
that shrouded your youth,  
leaving you bare,  
vulnerable to the reaper  
that visits during  
the darkened months of wonder.  
The soil offers no condolences,  
merely frozen nutrients  
you struggle to extract  
hoping to find enough sustenance  
to carry your body  
through the torment of night.  
Sleep is only a dream  
that fails to find reality

amidst the tumult of elements  
that rattles your spine.  
A ghostly sigh tainted by offal  
shudders across your breath,  
whispered from the door  
of the empire of worms.  
Surrender relieves you  
from a frozen death bed  
feeding you to a grave,  
but struggle rescues your heartbeat,  
even if that heartbeat  
is only a memory  
of the mystical orb that births hope.