

George Bogin

*Cottontail*

A couple of kids,  
we went hunting for woodchucks  
fifty years ago  
in a farmer's field.

No woodchucks  
but we cornered  
a terrified  
little cottontail rabbit  
in the angle  
of two stone fences.

He was sitting up,  
front paws together,  
supplicating,  
trembling  
while we were deciding  
whether to shoot him  
or spare him.

I shot first  
but missed,  
thank God.

Then my friend fired  
and killed him  
and burst into tears.

I did too.

A little cottontail.

A Haunter.

Robert Hayden

*Those Winter Sundays*

Sundays too my father got up early  
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,  
then with cracked hands that ached  
from labor in the weekday weather made  
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.  
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,  
and slowly I would rise and dress,  
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,  
who had driven out the cold  
and polished my good shoes as well.  
What did I know, what did I know  
of love's austere and lonely offices?

1962