

## ASH

Ash from a wood burning stove lodges  
for twelve days in my living room in the shape  
of angels' wings. It's sacrilegious to blow away  
twenty years of Christmas messages since we moved in.  
The cobweb hair adds dignity to the spruce's freshness  
a tree cut down in youth for peace not war.  
Each December when I add an angel to the highest branch  
there is no whisper of the weight she carries for children  
not yet born caught in the reigning wind of fire  
who'll balance on their shoulders new, inventive games  
and learn to skip between the West and East,  
unphased, whether pine or cactus, in the street.

Wendy French

