

## Jack Hand

### NEW ENGLAND

Rock, stone, farmland washed clear  
Of the mountainside, gully upon gully  
And ditch upon ditch filled with the last,  
Poor soil; beyond this, farmhouses

And the clean surprise of woods  
That cling, cut over, reforested  
By a single tree and grown great again,  
While the meadows have suffered

Flood and drought, the loose contagion  
Of the wind. My eye uncovers  
Nothing secret from those  
Who have lived in towns gutted by silence.

### PRAYER TO THE WHITETAIL STAG

The salt you lick may be Lot's wife recycled,  
That cautious bitch never lost to the world,  
But that is no matter to you,  
Who, rare among animals or men,  
Will die for fidelity to your mate.

The Indians honor you above humans,  
And with your blood make men from boys.  
Perhaps they are right; I have fired at you  
And still give chase in my dreams,  
Adolescent though half my life is gone.

My words pursue a phantom or a god—  
I must go, like the Shaman,  
To worship and fast in your forests,  
Taking with me none of my world,  
No food, nor gun, nor fire.