

## Three Poems after Hsieh Chin (Columbia Book of Later Chinese Poetry)

### A Poem on a Little Hemlock *for Leonard*

The seedling hemlock looks  
like an adult in miniature  
except for its smooth bark.

Stand beside it, lean over it,  
think how in thirty years  
it will be a tree to gaze up at.

Someplace below it, that's where we'll be.

(Chaves, 164)

### On The Poetic Line

Sometimes the poet needs  
lines plunked down like pavers.

Other times, o water snake,  
the poet requires suppleness.

Yours, as you lash water,  
slip forward, starting

a wake of s's that swells,  
spreads and subsides.

Long after you've gone, the poet  
holds in mind your sense of line.

(Chaves, 156-57)

### Gas Prices & Global Warming *for Rob*

Soon we won't drive.  
We will go to the mountains by train.  
After a day hiking, we'll nap on the way home.

You vow you'll never get another fill up.  
Ok. We have the best talks  
loud & single-file as we walk along.

Can you remember anything important  
a gas station attendant ever said?

(Chaves, "After Parting . . ."163)