

## After Chernobyl

Growing skin on a slab  
beside a cup of herbal tea,  
pair of sun glasses, book of graphite...

In her pocketbook there's a few test tubes  
busy with cells from some mouse's saliva.  
Through the lab sunlight bakes bricks,  
sets nacreous brilliance on tables.  
Later it will be even more yellow.

She makes science comfortable, homey,  
talks to the surgeon, the biochemist.  
About tissue cultures she places daffodils.  
Other lives are depending on such,  
heaving with spasms, breaking off limbs.  
Their bodies can't help it.

To think all this was caused by an accident,  
that a halo of wands took useful infrared energy  
and became something else. To think a controlled  
substance with its initial explosive potential  
really happened to do that:  
burst like wildfire, radiant heat melting down,  
searing the nearby.

Meanwhile, about the research room  
light continues to elucidate.  
Lasers graft follicles, their sharp beams  
a seamstress stitching. Here flesh is fabric  
being put to a test. Will it hold?

Sleuths who drink tea,  
conduct another experiment, tap for healing  
like water to find, if not a cure,  
then a means to live on.