

just enough

Issan steps outside to give the food offering to the birds:
quinoa, miso, and a hard little red apple that rolls down the hill.
Snow collects in the small of his back, the folds of his robe.
Our apples were baked, with walnuts.
The Buddha wasn't very hungry today.
Why not?
Because he'd already eaten.
When?
Before your mother was born.
What did he have?
Everything you don't like, didn't want, and wouldn't touch.
Roshi put the rubbery green strip of kombu in her sleeve to show the cook.
We collect and return to the tenzo our spat-out lemon pips, shiitake stems,
all the objects turned woody and dark in our mouths.
And Roshi's dog is out there now, too,
picking her way through hock-deep powder,
earnestly licking up every last grain she can find.