

Divining Rod

I'm witch hazel, myself, but a peach twig will serve,
Or a willow rod, as long as it's forked and pliant
And sensitive, of course.
How else detect
The rivers running underground,
The wells below the bones and rocks,
The secret springs we're made to nod our heads to?

My dowser picked me out of an old laurel thicket
Near Milton, Mass. He clipped me, stripped
My leaves, refined me to a Y
And like a blind prophet
I was taken out into the fields –
Expertly gripped if youthfully resistant,
Tensed for the quest, taut as a butterfly's antenna.

I was green back then, the day his knifeblade found me –
Green and beautiful and unaware.
Now my wood's gone gray,
My wings are brittle.
Still, I'll continue to articulate the presence
Of hidden waters till I'm tossed on a fire some night,
My own flames long doused, to warm my master's hands.