Under Neruda’s Wing
Cynthia Nordgren

At fifteen he dwelt in the dead poet’s house by day and at his parents’ home by night.
By day he dreamt of Pablo’s surprise appearance:
Pablo looking over his shoulder at his poems Pablo with his double chin and dark,
arched eyebrows Pablo’s sensual lips saying, “Let’s go for a walk.”
He dreamt of following the master’s heavy stride toward the sea of his footprints in soft sand until at the water’s edge the footprints were merely fleeting impressions on a surface too hard to trace when Pablo vanished.
Over time
which rushes forward in a dream
his own footprints to the sea were lapped and worn by waves like breath carrying words waves that passed one life onto another.

Winter
Nancy Takacs

Beyond the bitterness and mildness of leaves that are endless
after the flowering,
leaves left in sun to turn amber, in shade to hold their deep
lavender, leaves always there
to be picked and lain finely on screens and watched for days
in pagodas, in lotus gardens,
or cut thick as tobacco to dry on white sheets,
or left loose in old frying pans
in the desert, to curl up and be taken in right away so their mint
will still burn. Shaken everywhere
and onto any linen, apple and plum,
chamomile’s tiny gold sponge
To rub between forefinger and thumb, a cross
between honey and medicine.

Beyond the calmness of an ancient pathless garden, where leaves
must always be steeped for a long time
to be sipped in small cups, longer than our memory. Beyond hot
scones, and sunflower toast, and bookstores,
and teahouses, and transparent bags left out late, the damp
nighty-nights of valerian, root and stem
of raspberry, never any berries, just a hint of sweet red and bristle,
deep, capable, settling us in January, not wishing
for any first leaf. Beyond Belleek’s
proper shapes to lift with taut fingers held in small waterfalls,
to breathe in, then become
the elderberry, the blue night, the bees, the rose,
the cure.