The first wasp of March has drowned

in the runoff barrel that waits beneath the valleys
of my roof. It joined leaves that have browned
and slimed since October, congealed and dissolved
under ice into damp skeletons, collections of veins,
melted and melded into a Spring soup. Boxelders
crawl around the barrel, through crisped leaves
around its base, under the rusted Radio Special
my mother uses as a planter, avoid the water,
see the wasp trapped, flash the hidden red
under their wings, and dip away.

Soon, we will have to dump the barrel,
pour it out into the yard before rain
overflows it too close to the foundation.
We will feed the clovers the dead leaves,
the slimy mess, the wasp carcass.
The boxelders will watch.