What is the Poison Named?

We are the ones who would name it madness.
What light comes out of the covered sky that makes the pines shine like this?—This is what we should ask. We should tell stories, clear and true that equal what we would say, but it isn't that simple. What light makes the trees so green on such a dark day?

Our shoes stick in the mud. The red-gold dog runs ahead of us, runs behind, his mane tangled with needles and cedar twigs. Your fingers are cold when they touch mine. The sky grey through and through. As the light thins within the ravine the trees lean up the banks where they can. Mist collects and falls from the tips of branches like an offering to a thirsting god. It
could be us, we could live
on this distilled breath
of fir. The plaid of your
shirt in front of me takes
me home, and I recall
how this morning, not speaking,
you stretched it over
your brown shoulders and turned
away. It isn’t much, this
sharing. We keep walking
down into the dark ravine
and I begin to walk slower
fall behind till I feel
alone in this thicket and
it rises so green around
me, shoots into the sky,
however grey. Bursting above me.

Step out, and you’re waiting.
The dog offers us each an
end of his stick and we take
it and smile. You think I tell
this story to create itself. You think
I say these things to make them
true.

Neile Graham