

### **In the Red**

If memory means losing track  
of time, I more than qualify.

Was Kennedy murdered yesterday  
or fifty-six Novembers ago?

Were my grandchildren just born,  
or are they really twenty,  
seventeen and twelve?

The maple

I just planted can't be higher  
than my roof already, but it is.

I still recall my rifle  
number but forget (or want  
to forget) who's President.

Don't talk to me about  
inflation, taxes or weekends  
at Disney World.

It's all

one contemporary lapse.  
I've lost count of birthdays.  
I stumble on stairs I climbed  
two at a time last year.

Today I pulled off the road  
to be sure I knew where  
I was going...

For reassurance

I glance at a branch of the maple  
where a male and female cardinal  
are perched at attention.

Paired

for life, they look as if  
they've found what everybody seeks.

He's royally red and poised  
like the god of love invoked  
by worshippers.

She looks less vivid  
but seems more sensible and smarter.

*For Shea Murtaugh*