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Winter Fog on New Year's Eve

Fog makes the familiar strange,
the strange, dangerous.
The twisted branches around the house,
stripped of their distracting background
pantomime the silent struggle
of absent leaves seeking sun.
The smooth white paper of fog
draws the trees from the confused clutter
of the random landscape,
curates them into the muffled quiet
of its transitory museum.
We too pause silent,
enclosed by the shortened sight-lines.
A gentle awe rolls in along the ground,
fading where roots enter the earth.

~`

Candle Water

The flickering flame
thoughts slipping through my mind's fingers
bright translucent
like water pressed to invisibility
tapering to a wavering point
each a fleeting memory almost as it begins
hovering atop its black wick
such gossamer connection to the solid earth
feeding its mimic life
feathered by imagination
inhabiting the air
like a clinging mist
which feeds and in the end
coagulates falls
extinguishes it

Icy

i

Winter waning,
the pond behind our house,
long time ice and snow-bound,
plays a prairie blown over
with wisps and coils of snow,
its motile summer days
hidden from my splashless mind.

In the shadow of zero-degree days,
augury holes drilled in its ice
predict its nine-inches would hold a car.
But warming weather thins the ice,
weakens the prophecy,
warns the future may give way.

Only when the pond is braced,
deep frozen, shore to shore
do we know where we stand.
When the ice cannot sustain belief,
that's the danger
since only gods can walk on water.

ii

Gentle currents of the small back river
feeding the pond begin to stroke the ice
relaxing into welcome warmth as more
dancing ice moves into the rhythm
of the current and the wind,
and ice becomes water
though water and ice are already one.

Spring surrounds us with plants and creatures
rising from the dead, reasserting themselves
in glorious bloom and growth.
Like quickening water, though
no longer tense with cold, we stay the same.

After all the ice melts, some of it remains
lodged in my imagination,
but warmed by summer days,
I forget, and in late fall,

~`

I will awake some morning,
surprised that overnight a thin ice skim
has rendered the pond surface stiff.

~`

Facing 19

*If a man will strike, strike
through the mask.*

--Ahab

I am
but a mask:
all passes through me,
keeping in secrets
keeping out fears,
hiding and becoming
me.

Maskless I would disappear,
the body boundary permeable,
unraveling,
entangling in the crowd
of all things:
your breath becomes mine
as we live and die together.
Das Narrenschiff.

"I am."

"I was."

"I will be."

Aye, Aye.

Floating gravestones every one,
marking time for what is not,
only the breath
always in motion,
even in silence.

Holding the breath
is losing the breath.

All must pass
through.

All.

~`

Falling

The world is all that is the case

-Ludwig Wittgenstein

When we have passed
through a fall's threshold,
when our grasp of the floor is gone
and nothing's to be done,
we are moved through space
in the embrace of force
beyond our reach
even if we disbelieve.

Enough time perhaps
for a nostalgia flash
of the world before the fall,
for a fierce "No"
silent or screamed against
what will be lost,
how the body will be changed—
the heavy self that
drags us down
and crushes us against
the pain that has not
yet happened,
the pain that will tear us
from the past and future
and jolt us roughly
to the present floor,
to confront all that is the case.