

## Two Tents

sag under snow,  
home for people have nowhere else to go,  
at a picnic area,  
a mile out of town,  
where they've camped since summer  
in a patch of woods next to the Winooski River,  
which rushes by but says nothing.  
Morning traffic—school busses,  
commuters, skiers on their way  
to slopes or second homes.  
300 feet from the tents,  
a brown house with river view,  
ten rooms, three car garage,  
fireplaces, bright Christmas lights.  
Winter night comes early,  
for those who live in tents,  
snow blows, rattles pines,  
river rolls over icy stones,  
bones turn to ice.

## **Birds Without Borders**

A dozen gulls feed on fast food scraps,  
rest on a tractor trailer  
at a New York Thruway service area;  
soon more gulls join them,  
beaks pointed west,  
maybe they know this truck  
is headed toward Lake Erie,  
though they'd rather fly,  
than cling to the top of a trailer,  
as it roars down the thruway,  
unlike refugees from Honduras,  
who must cling to boxcars across Mexico.

The truck roars away beneath their wings,  
and twelve gulls ride wind currents northwest,  
out over Lake Erie.  
Canada geese, redwing blackbirds, a few flickers,  
fly south with cargo ships and fishing trawlers far below.  
Flocks cross back and forth,  
borders, customs booths,  
walls, fences, guards with guns irrelevant,  
memory passed bird to bird,  
their celestial compass,  
flyways older than nations,  
as old as these lakes—  
wings over water.

## Two Tents

sag under snow,  
home for people have nowhere else to go,  
at a picnic area,  
a mile out of town,  
where they've camped since summer  
in a patch of woods next to the Winooski River,  
which rushes by but says nothing.  
Morning traffic—school busses,  
commuters, skiers on their way  
to slopes or second homes.  
300 feet from the tents,  
a brown house with river view,  
ten rooms, three car garage,  
fireplaces, bright Christmas lights.  
Winter night comes early,  
for those who live in tents,  
snow blows, rattles pines,  
river rolls over icy stones,  
bones turn to ice.

## **Full Wolf Moon**

On New Year's Day the moon is full,  
Abenaki people said wolves howled in hunger  
outside villages on the first moon after winter solstice,  
some years people were hungrier than wolves.  
Now there are no wolves left here,  
but there are still those who howl with hunger,  
though not from the forest behind my house,  
there are quieter cries from the village,  
where there's a food shelf in a church;  
when the blue moon rises  
on the last day of January,  
people will be out of food again.  
From Earth we can't see the moon's dark side,  
from the other side of town, we hardly ever  
see those who come after work or school,  
so they can have lunch or supper.  
Some come in moonlight  
so they might not be seen,  
or better still in darkness,  
when a cloud passes over the moon,  
ashamed that it's come to this,  
that they must come in hunger.

## **Those Who Hunger**

The hungry eat lunch in a church basement,  
come to the food pantry each Saturday,  
those who seek refuge  
are torn from their children at the border,  
those who hunger  
ride trains for days seeking sanctuary,  
the hungry come  
across seas on flimsy boats of flotsam,  
some will die on their journey,  
many will be turned away,  
by angry men,  
but someday—

Esuriéntes implévit bonis:  
et dívites dimísit inánes.  
He hath filled the hungry with good things;  
and the rich he hath sent empty away. \*

\*J.S. Bach Magnificat, Aria A