

Intrusive Beauty

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Telescope

Just look: the egret's white
Reflects so like a cloud

Pursuing other clouds,
Which blow just like the white

Of wind-borne sand that winds
As if it were the wave

Atumble, breaking crest
All fracture like those shells

That fall from gulls whose beaks
Resemble oyster knives,

More dull than razor clams
And drabber than the speck

Of freighter farther out
Than one might ever hope

To swim, especially you
Who sees through glass egress

So clearly now what's not
Before your eyes. But look.

Thaw

All afternoon police unearth
the dead from roadside drifts of snow.
It happens like this every spring:
a passing motorist reports
dark tint inside a melting pile
or catches sunlight glinting off
a well-sewn button or a shoe.
Perhaps a hand, a bud unbloomed,
extends there toward imagined help.
Found are those whose orbit slipped
some imperceptible degree
before we ever thought them lost.
We watched a drifter stagger through
three lanes of traffic, arms asway
as if conducting some rush hour
motet his ears alone could hear.
He waved. I almost waved right back.
In lilac light the cruisers flashed
against the dusk. Someone dug.
Someone else rerouted cars.
We drove directly home to lie
together side by side, converse
about these newly exhumed dead.
You fear, I know, our daughter woke
mid-fight to hear about our own
dissolving dreams, this falling out of,
into love. The dead are neutral ground
and so, exhausted, spent, to them
we steer our words. It's almost prayer.
Tonight they'll rise from deep inside

of me as, half-asleep, I turn
and slip my hand in yours. But first,
so that my touch won't startle you,
won't wake you from unquiet dreams,
I'll hold my hand out to the night
and let it grow a little cold.