

PARALLEL

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One moves oneself away from oneself. Snow falls without slant, the night is without breeze, the sleigh is without driver, one is without companion, the horses are without soul. If one were to ride in a sleigh on a wintry night, a night of solitude and orchestral snow, or if one were a percussion apprentice, a banger of cymbals and wood blocks, one would scatter one's thoughts across the snowy scape, into the tuba bells, into the conductor's reveries, into the evergreen woods, the sleigh leaving parallel tracks in the snow, horse treadings, confident hoofmarks, marring the internal margins. One has been riding in the sleigh night after night, winter after winter, the horses becoming skeletons, a bone-steady clip-clopping through the linen paths of one's diorama forest, one's molded sleigh-driver having long ago abandoned one to one's musings, one's everlasting ponderings, one thinking, for instance, about clearing a field below the belvedere's hill, a place to plant one's memories, to unearth one's forgettings, a fallow field or a field of wildflowers, out in the snow, a snowy evening into a snowy night, evergreen forested, the sky a papery blue-black, rear-projected, one's sleigh moving and not moving, appearing to move but not moving, snow falling upon the horses and the sleigh and the trees, white on white, collecting upon one's coverlet where

One moves oneself away from oneself. Lanes stretch into the snowy distance, the horse knowing the way around the countryside, taking one on a patterned tour, oblongs and loops and ovals and crossings, the horse understanding one's mood, one's desire for the sleigh ride to persist, leisurely, perpetual. One rides in a sleigh on a winter's night, alone, wrapped in bed blankets, satin under flannel under wool, a light snow falling upon one's plastic forests. One is a percussive engineer, a cymbal master, standing behind the trombones, anticipatory of one's triangle moment, the sleigh tracks and the hoofmarks slowly obscured by falling powder, one having ridden in one's sleigh for hours, since supper, one bundling oneself in one's father's jacket, or what resembles a robe, thickly collared and silk lined, the solitary horse spewing steam, the sleigh leaving parallel tracks assumed to meet at infinity, one thinking about instance, not as measurable time, but as occasion in memory, as description in a clear field. One thing becomes another not because it's different from the other, but because there exists space between the thing and the other. The difference comes in the lack of attachment. If it could be shown that everything is connected, even if filamentally, there could be no differentiation, and therefore either nothing or all.

it's most exposed, at one's knees and elbows, one as gangly as one wishes, while one thinks of one's hearth at home, one's cardboard fireplace, the log and flames rendered by a child, the child rendered by one's imagination, one's imagination rendered by one's inexpressible becoming. One stands on the crowded stage at the concert hall, one's palms not sweaty, sweat not dripping down one's back under one's tuxedo, one feeling calm with one's cymbals in one's hands, inbetween trumpet blasts and timpani rolls, the crash of metal against metal set to thrill one's ears, to tingle one's wrists and arms and elbows and shoulders. Or, the truth, one knows nothing of percussion, symphonic or ritual, or of sleigh rides through fields of forget-me-nots, now snow blanketed, white burdened, stunned with winter, one knowing only what one knows, and scarce half of that. One is never without companion, God or no God, gods or no gods, love or friendship or neither love nor friendship, faith or truth or belief or triangle moments, one is with self, with one's history and actuality and destiny, one's flesh and one's mind, the errors of one's ways, from the brick to the alabaster, the blink to the flinch to the rustle to the rage, one arriving at self-loathing through succumbing to self-satisfaction, one delivering self-acceptance to oneself via self-

The snow thickens and falls and falls and falls and falls, and before the snowy night becomes a blue morning, early blue, white into blue before blue, before yellow and light, or before gray and the perpetuation of daylit snow, long before the night gives way to day, while the snow falls upon the forests of one's imagination, one ruminates. Everywhere, absolutely. The snow brings one the allowance of leisure, a sleigh ride throughout one's night, an existence of night, nights of snow, horse, cymbals and the ever necessary triangle moment. One can stand, simultaneously, in a music hall *and* recline into the anaesthetizing folds of blankets in a deep sleigh, one has such potent imaginative power at one's disposal, whether the forests be fake or regal, the percussion orchestral or native, one's hands strong or weak, or strong and weak, the flamboyance of choice, the balance of inclusion, one believing in attention span, far and wide. One is alone and one is companioned, violent acts of mercy, solitude and company, collaborative memory, collective telling, isolated prayer, one's faithful horse becomes two trotting skeletons, one observes oneself as if one were in one's peripheral vision, as if one were watching oneself ride in a sleigh on a snowy night through silver screen forests, one resembling one's father as one is clothed as one's father, the

affliction, one allowing the snow to cover one as white dust on a rotting book. Permeability isn't an option, it's an imperative. Matter and ideas pass through one (particles pass through the book), molecular and spiritual, the everlasting exchange, the eternal expressway. One is as much transformer as vessel, as much conduit as reservoir. The woods glisten. One glistens one's woods. Snow upon snow, white multiply. When one left one's house, castle or shack, one stared at one's cardboard fireplace, doubting its logs would burn until one's sleigh ride was done, until one's horses collapsed, until one was thought out and exhausted, the painted fire blazing in the comfortable sitting room, one's books spread across the couch and tables and floor rugs, one's mug of coffee cold, one's glass of water murky, one expecting to discover dying embers upon one's return, if one is to return. As one stands in one's tuxedo on the symphony hall stage, the stage floor wide-planked like one's childhood bedroom, the audience pert and coifed, one gazing out at them as one might gaze at phosphorescence in evening breakers, or as one might study the sparkings of gears in subterranean machinery, one imagines the men and women of the audience as evergreens, firs and spruces, and the smattering of children as snowflakes, children

sleigh exuding royalty or privileged living, living *is* privilege, purple robe or soiled cloak, the ting of a triangle or the rumble of aluminum sheet thunder. Mutability is fated, for everyone, for each thing. Stasis is an illusion brought about by material constraints, one not witnessing the movement because of one's movement, one not sensing the shift of space because of one's temporal perspective. Snow upon snow, green divide. When one left one's house, belvedere or hovel, one glanced at one's fake fireplace, wondering if its logs would burn until one's sleigh ride was done, until one's horse collapsed or mutinied, until one's thoughts were exhausted or one was frozen, the crayoned fire crackling in the sparse room, one's book placed carefully on the end table, the leather chair still showing one's presence, one's coffee cold, one's water lukewarm, one fearing one will find dead ashes in the hearth upon one's homecoming, if one makes it home. One likes the back row of the orchestra, one's copper soul hiding behind the brass men, the crescendo amalgam, trum and trom, pets and bones, the audience roiling like the open sea, one staring out at them as if one were a crayola sketch, a blunted bent mark. One's throat hurts when one swallows, the beginnings of what will become a violent catarrh with a strangulating cough, but that

upon children upon children, and one thinks of self as self and self as other and other as other and other as self. Suddenly, one's horses stop short. Their necks twist toward one and away from one another, but one cannot tell if they're eyeing one, as if for fresh instructions, or looking beyond one, as if at something behind the sleigh. The turn of a neck isn't the same as the turn of a screw or the turn of a page. One assumes that time will progress, snow will accumulate, one or one's horses will desire the comforts of study or stables, the night will shift to dawn, it will come time to go home. One twists one's neck as if one were a horse, to look behind the sleigh, to see if anything is to be seen, or felt, or understood. The lane, empty, disappears into the night's blue. What is odd, what makes one catch one's breath, is that the snow is undisturbed, without any tracks whatsoever. One reaches behind one to put away one's cymbals and pick up one's triangle. All of the world, all of existence, all of one's life reduces to a twist and a stoop and a reach, a glance behind one, a stray thought at an inappropriate moment. If time is non-linear, if it's a construct or if it's without boundaries, a blink of an eye equals an eon, connectivity renders duration superfluous, limitlessness is a limitation. One is in one's sleigh, one's horses aren't moving or they're

hasn't and won't affect tonight's performance, not noticeably. In between cymbal strikes, one thinks of self as self and other as other and other as self and self as other. Suddenly, one's horse stops short. The beast paws at the ground, as if to verify its snow-covered validity, the horse not glancing at one, as if it understands one ought to already know the cause behind the sleigh's coming to a halt. What one doesn't know is unknowable. One feels sorry for one's horse, for its solitude, its lack of companionship beyond its pensive master, these night-long meandering sleigh rides across a landscape not of its making. One wants to reach out to pat the horse's neck, to soothe its nerves, but one can't resist twisting within one's blankets to peek behind the sleigh. The lane, uninhabited, disappears into the laden trees. One is struck by the lane's unmarred surface, the fallen snow's virgin condition, as if no horse or sleigh had passed this way in hours. One reaches behind one to put away one's cymbals and pick up one's triangle. All of one's life, all of this time, from childhood to now, one had thought that philosophy and religion and science could be reduced to perspective, solo or collective, within or across time, temporarily caught, vastly limited. Now one senses the possibility that meaning is fluid, or gaseous, or

trotting along nicely through the snow, one is upon the cluttered stage reaching for one's triangle, one sits warming one's hands at one's false fire, one's painted hearth, one admiring one's father's cloak, its history as a garment of inclusion, one imagining a sleigh ride of grand and private proportions. The triangle isn't where one left it, the lane is empty, one's forests are wintry silent. When one was young, when everyone was young, one believed in the tension of good versus evil, the inevitability of failure, the necessity of redemption, the eventual pooling of the all. Now one feels as if the pooling is perpetual, as if the pooling of the all *is* the all. When one was young, one liked stairs. One liked crevices, falls, 5 cracked and broken glass, scissors and coins, hard gum and colored soda, empty drawers with wood-dust smell, the flabby skin under one's father's chin, when one was young. Outside of one's experience, one is able to move. The horses are moving again, pulling the sleigh around the belvedere's property, the laden land of one's father's dreams. One eases back into near slumber, letting the blue-grey-white of the night intercede on one's behalf. To be able to tell one thing from another is one's desire, one's wish for differentiation, one's need to witness oneself as individual without self. The horses have brought one to the lowest hollow of one's

changeable, ice to water to steam, shifting with conditions. One accepts one's conditions, wrapped in blankets in one's sleigh, one's horse at ease with its duties, a light snow falling, one remembering one's percussive place on stage, behind the brass, one remembering one's father in his cloak in the chair by the crayoned hearth, one imagining a forever sleigh ride. The triangle isn't where it's supposed to be, the lane is empty, one's forests persist with snowy hush. When the world was young, when thinking was younger, one thought one would suffer consequences, that decisions brought repercussions, that actions caused reactions, that matter could be discerned from spirit. These days one wishes to believe in universal paradox, in motionless motion, in what cannot be believed. When the world was young, belief was in breath, in sleep, in vomit and pain and chewing, in the positioning of an elbow and the angling of a knee, the spilling of seed, the graying of hair, the rotting of teeth, when the world was young. Within one's experience, one doesn't exist. The horse is moving again, pulling the sleigh around the snowy grounds of the belvedere. One reclines into one's meditative stupor and watches snowflakes fall from as steep and deep as one can squint, to the ground, or onto the trees, or one's horse's back, or one's coverlet. One

father's property, now one's mother's property, one not wanting property, one not wanting proprietorship of anything, not even self, but one's observations of one's self, outside of one's self, elsewhere from self. One imagines a walk with one's father, into the woods, where someone could get lost, one's father having been constructed of papier-maché, one holding his stiffened hand, the forest not yet wintered, one's father not yet absent. One tries to keep stride with the man, to stay abreast of his mind, clotted and choked with forest smell, with the difference between and the distance within, the different distance. One neither follows in one's father's footsteps nor blazes one's perpendicular path, one merely ⁶ keeping him company by clasping his hand, inflexible fingers one formed with paste and butcher's paper and patience and affection, the bloodless skin surface-warming and softening under one's grip. One's father, one once believed, was one's to create. Now, in one's wistfulness, in the hollow of the land, one watches one walk with one's fabricated father, through the forests of one's consummation, a man unshaven and a boy unhaired, a man of tree and a boy of channeled water, together, through one's childhood woods, one's father speaking in his papery voice, of meditative grace and bodily angst, one listening with

wishes to understand pervasive connectivity, what links everything to everything else, not what the glue is, but what makes the concept of glue superfluous, the words *linkage* and *connection* shown to be obsolete. The horse has brought one to the plank bridge over the swift creek, one's father's water, one's father's wood. One remembers a walk with one's father, out of the forest, where one had gone to get lost, up the hill toward the belvedere, from where one's father had come to make one found, to bring one home, for good things, the fake fireplace, the sunny oriel, the mother's cakes, the sunken books, one's father clutching one's hand with his swallowing hand. His steps would have outdistanced one, or forced one to stumble under his grasp, if one's memory hadn't altered one's legs, from stubby to lithe, one's memory lessening the grade of the belvedere's slope, from craggy to gradual, one's memory providing one's father with an artifact coat. One doesn't believe one's father exists. One doubts the existence of a sire or a lord or a blooded benefactor. One's father, one believes, is one's to uncreate. The walk, to one's memory, ended in the study with warmed milk, without reprimand, an afghan across one's lap, one observing one's hearth, one's father in the chair by the crayoned fire, his nose buried in a dictionary of antiquity, one's father

unmothered ears. As one twists one's hand to one's opposite pocket, to fetch a match, to ignite one's father's form, without letting go of his hand with one's weaker hand, one is surprised to be incapable of finding one's triangle where it should be, on the rack, between the cowbell and the woodblocks, the orchestral nocturne nearing its faux ending, its penultimate climax, one eyeing the glockenspiel as substitute. One expects the triangle to be where one expects it to be, as if expectations and empiricisms are parallel before intersecting, and not haphazard before trailing off after their accident. The horses whinny, impatient for motion. One urges them out of the hollow. The snow, this deep into the night, neither lessens nor thickens, one fond of its constancy, one admiring its persistence across one's father's property, now one's mother's property, one desiring no specific possession beyond one's time and undergarments and thoughts and teeth, one wishing one needed none of these, one desiring release from one's desire for release. One's horses are skeletal, almost spectral, the snowflakes passing through their form, their image, their memory. One's mother passes through one's jacket. One's horses are spooked by the screech of an owl, distant and forested. They rear, one's loyal horses, without bolting, one calming them

tenoring sure words into the room's shy air, one's mother scarce, unthought of, unproduced. As one twists to grab one's triangle, one isn't wearing one's father's coat, lavender and goldenrod, but a tuxedo coat, black and stiff, one's sleeves a tad short for reaching, one's cuffs flaring white, like caps on night waves, one not able to procure a triangle if that triangle doesn't exist, one wondering if one could imitate its sound with one's voice, one knowing flesh isn't metal, falsetto isn't ping, fabric isn't foam on water. One's expectations of the triangle's whereabouts aren't met, raising doubts about one's expectations or one's comprehension of events, one's sensate equilibrium, one's grasp of happenings within happenstance. The horse stamps, awaiting one's word. One encourages it across the creek bridge. The snowfall, as if regulated, as if machine-dropped from celestial catwalks, layers the night's countryside without threat of excessive weight or the burden of white or winter's grief, one responding to the snow as one responds to one's swallow or one's blink, one's breath, one's heartbeat, taking it for granted, consideration after consideration, dream after waking dream, forms after images after memories after self. One's horse is gaunt, resembling a fashion bride on the verge of collapse. One hasn't a

with one's father's voice. Another owl, nearer, responds to the further owl, a sunken sound, as if from within a hollow tree, a fallen log, a gutted stump. Horses shouldn't fear owls. One mulls what one knows. Owls don't threaten horses. One's reaching for one's triangle is standard behavior. One's stage shoes, with one's thin black socks, are loose. One could twist out of one's shoes, straining to grasp what isn't there to be grasped. One's as capable of stepping out of one's shoes as one is of climbing out of one's sleigh. This hushes the owls, perks the horses. A standing vantage is as unlike a sitting perspective as a crouched attentiveness is unlike a reclined vision. The world alters itself. The world is altered, irrevocably, by mobility, once and for all, instance after instance, throughout every moment, the indefatigable innocence of motion. One pats the rump of one of the horses. The animal flesh, neither skeletal nor spectral, is warm under the settled white, and one's palm comes away moist. The snow, as if to accommodate one's pedestrian condition, has stopped. The horses, the owls, the snow, suspend, awaiting one's move. One offers no apology for one's indeterminateness, not knowing if one should, one's hesitancy assured. One climbs back into the sleigh. Failure hounds one, as inevitability and choice. One

father, now or then or never, the weave of one's jacket warped to one's ribs. In the woods, off the sleigh's flank, an owl screeches. The sound is reminiscent of a breaking ratchet in a close cellar. One's horse halts. The owl responds to itself, a curious, plaintive hoot. Thus, one imagines, an owl speaks of one, offering commentary and private observations, unable, one supposes, to spy out one's father or one's triangle, the owl caring only of one's correlative position to itself, as one is constantly aware of one's spatial relationship to the belvedere, or the placement of one's percussive instruments on the rack behind one, one neither grasping one's reasons for not keeping the rack to one's front, nor one's reasons for wishing to keep the owl between the belvedere and the sleigh. One hunkers into the depths of one's blankets, within one's father's coat, the one that one imagines as resembling a robe. The owl's screeching has altered the night. One considers truncating the sleigh ride to go home to one's hearth, out of devotion to fabricated memory, but one also likelihoods the fire's burnt-down condition and chooses to stay with the known chill over the one that is half-forgotten. Half-remembering and half-forgetting bookend the empty shelf of proof. One is reticent to ask one's horse to resume its trot, feeling as if one were responsible for this stop-start night,

climbs into one's childhood bed. The eggshell-blue flannel sheets, worn thin by agitated legs, welcome one as lone occupant, ever, the belvedere not imagining siblings or cousins or sleepover children for one, one imagining neither pet nor specter as playmate, one romping the grounds with one's pulse and projections and wishings, one's mother or father never crawling in with one, whatever the weather, fever, nightmare or insomniac doubt. The pillow knows one's profile, one's sour youthful breath, has known one's drool, one's tears. When one studies one's ceiling, the textured plaster, the hairline cracks resembling topographical rivers, the cobwebbed corners, one conjures a room with a cardboard 9
hearth, a papier-maché father, a reading room with swallowing armchairs, a painting on the wall of one in an artifact coat riding alone in a sleigh through a cinematic night. A breeze rises, and one's horses, despite the frosty air, appear to freshen in spirit, acquire a lilt to their trots. The owls are out of one's thoughts. One seldom dwells on living beings one can't control. One didn't invent the owl. If one didn't fabricate the owls, as one might've the horses, if one isn't their creator, as one might be of the forests and the lanes and the belvedere and the snow, then they're beyond one's fathoming. The bending lanes of the woods resemble the papered

this out-of-the-flow uncertainty. One climbs down from the sleigh. Failure hounds one, as inclusion and omission. One climbs down from one's deathbed. The floor's rugs, worn thin from a lifetime of pacing, accept one's soles as familiar, always, one's room as sanctuary from the birth of one's imagination to the ripe and skew and wilt of one's memory, the heart's constriction, the closing mind, one's mother and father long gone into oblivion, one's childless belvedere harboring no restless souls but one's own, the house emptied of prophecy. Corridors slope toward stairways, wooden stairs are worn down from even the solo traffic of one, the stables await one's stride, one's desire for the wintered forests and hushed lanes, the hither and thithering sleigh ride, the isolation of one whose treetop windows are portable, one who observes one's world as if one were a painted image, naively rendered, swaddled in smeared blankets, riding in a sleigh, wet crayoned, horse-drawn, dreaming of a symphonic nocturne. One drifts into the woods, away from the lane, away from one's vacant horse, one's vacated sleigh. The owl weighs on one's mind. It isn't an imagined being, or not from one's imagination, not as far as one comprehends one's imagination. The origin of the forests, be they organic or plastic, one grasps. One's horse, fostered or

corridors within the belvedere, the snow-coated evergreens passing by as if painted and printed and pasted on walls, one smoothing them with one's memory, one wistful for those childhood mornings of imagining oneself along the corridor from one's bedroom, down the back stairway, out the kitchen doors and into the aromas of early light. One's father, before one torched him, told one that we, he and one, are endlessing. Before one took the stage, with one's implements of clank and clang and swish, one thought one caught a glimpse, in the deeper recesses of the concert hall's balcony, of a child, boy or girl or neutered dream, without accompaniment. One puts one's triangle where one can find it at the necessary moment, the premature crescendo. Then, when one is in need of reassurance as the violins squeal and the tubas belch, one wondering if one were to possess a wound alarm clock, if one could produce the isolated metallic sounds the score demands, one's present self will recall one's past self's trust in one's future self's recollections of one's past self's acts. Around the snowy bend one's horses unexpectedly slow as they come upon a one-horse sleigh stopped in the moonlit lane. Neither one of one, one's aware, wishes to meet the other out in one's winter forests, not now, not even now that the land is held in the confidence of

molded, one knows. But the owl, to one, is inscrutable. Within the woods, one is out of sight of the sleigh. One holds no expectations of stumbling upon the owl's perch or hollow. The owl is an observer. One is observed. The evergreens endure their coats of snow while one is snug within the coat of one's mother's lost love, and if snow were mere water, one's grief could become its underground table. The coat's woolen collar, not as soft as its silk-lined sleeves, scratches one's jaw. One's father, before closing his book and shuffling to bed, told one that they, one's mother and her light, were endless. As one took the stage, bearing one's arsenal of percussive metals and woods, one thought the smattering of audience smug, this outdoor sunday afternoon gathering of aesthetic ease, the breezy amphitheater experience, the open air inhalation of culture. One puts one's triangle where one can find it at the crucial moment, the eager crescendo. Then, as one seeks solace amid the organ rumbles and cornet blasts, one thinking of substituting a xylophone to create the nuanced imminent pings spotlighted in the score, one will also seek self-trust in failure and failure reversal, junction and disjunction, parallel and perpendicular self-alignment. Alone in the white meadow, the moon unveiled, the snow halted, evergreen

a feminine hand, a motherly light. One eases one's sleigh around one's sleigh, forcing one's horses to struggle with their hocks through the snow berm along the lane's edge. After this maneuver, after regaining one's eminency of an otherwise empty lane, one's sleigh ride persists, unabated, the moon obscured by clouds as the snow resumes falling, one wondering why one strayed from one's sleigh into the wintry woods, leaving one's solitary and sensitive horse alone in the lane, susceptible to a passing stranger's fancy. One assigns meaning to the events of one's life, banal to epiphanal, imagined or conceived, plucked from a mine or salvaged from a debris field, one transcribing one's logarithmic scatter, one logging the locations of one's twice-buried bones. One's born into the sleigh, from one's thick bed to the belvedere's thin corridors, to the stables and the impervious sleigh, the impotent rides, one tugging the blankets to one's chin, one curling one's toes within one's socks within one's boots, one breathing in through one's mouth and out through one's nose, one's eyes watering under the spell of a winter's evening gone night. Out of one's inclination for privacy comes one's wandering in public, even if it comes within a private bend of the clock, as far from twilight as it is from dawn. The snow is a constant, although like one's solitude,

encircled, one hears sleigh bells and the snorting of horses out in the lane as they approach one's horse and one's emptied sleigh. One stays hidden in the forest, not wanting to converse with one tonight, not this night, not in a pool of moonlight beside one of the belvedere's seldom or oft traveled byways. One crouches behind a pungent spruce, the tree smelling of a wholly considered life, of prime effort, of growth and stability, even in the frozen night. The snow resumes. After the tinkling of one's sleigh bells diminish, one makes one's way back to one's sleigh, and after patting one's horse's known neck, one climbs under the still-warm blankets and urges one's horse to renew the ride in the opposite way of one's double-horsed sleigh. One ascribes meanings to the happening of one's life, the incessant unfolding, the breath in the creases, the eventual ironed death, one witnessing each tuck and crimp, every ravel and fray, the whole fabric isolated (cut off) by its lack of perimeter seams. One projects oneself into one's oriel one sunny winter's day, one as bare-chested as one dare be in private, one's collarbones and sternum sleek under one's sliding thumb, one's hoved ribs shadowing the rug as a trellis might a patio, one's skull calibrating the aromas of baked flowers on the sill, one's heart pounding back at the sun. There,

it comes and goes. Across one's land, one's mother's land, the land of one's fathers, the belvedere's land, one's horses meander the lanes with one in tow, cozy under blankets and within one's drifting thoughts, through the woods and around the lake, frozen solid this deep into winter, consecrated by snowfall, inviting one to slumber under its pack, the ice in one's veins no match for its acreage of hardened water, one's imagination no match for its seasonal certainty. One's joy is found within a fragmented god, one's sorrow rests with one's father's ashes, one's happiness seeks the rare strawberry over the common stew. In the middle of the night, any middle of any night, if one is alone or in unwanted company, or anticipating one's arrival at reconciliation, it is a long long ride to morning. So this is how one stands one's lonelinesses, the endurance of actuality distilled into memory, the memory evaporating into faithed air, the air breathed, almost unknowingly, by one unknown. Mothers inhale fathers into their bloodstreams, passing them through their lungs to their hearts, through their flows, into the soil, to grow trees. If one were to stumble upon love amid the evergreens and the eversnow and the hidden owls, through complicity or fortune or fate, one would pocket it as winter fruit. When one goes to strike one's

indoors, under a slanted glass ceiling of blue sky, one hothouses. Out of one's inclination for light comes one's propensity for shrouded thought, especially musings into missing corners. It's an option to believe one's solitude is chosen. It's imperative to believe one's solitude is permanent and sporadic. When one stands at one's bedroom window, one is able to gaze beyond the forests to the expanse of lake waters, placid in midday hush or white-capped in a wind or frozen in place, locked in memory, a body of consolation water, providing solace from a distance of treetops and anglepoise, one's vantage from the oriel allowing one towering nonchalance, even when prone on the floor within a parallelogram of sun. One's sorrow resides in one's god's figments, one's joy circulates one's mother's air, one's happiness pursues logical canal grid. Sunslant, if one is spared its blistering force, is redemptive, through windowglass or lake haze or open mountain clarity, one's skin receiving it as orphaned self-affection come home. In this way, someday, within moments of extreme solitude, one wishes one's love, the unlikely other, almost without one's discernment, might brush against one's surface. Fathers rub mothers raw, in contentment and in misery, the evanescent brush reciprocated with possessive friction, the flaming of paper love. When one

triangle with one's triangle striker, assuming one has one's triangle to strike and one's striker to strike it with, one recognizes in one's limbs one's inability to duplicate a gesture. One's body isn't paper, isn't water, isn't metal or wood or sinew or fire—it's idea. Then, as quickly as it's articulated, even if unspoken, it becomes memory. From one's sleigh one considers dismissing history, not for the sake of ignorance or denial, not to relieve guilt or dampen regrets, but to unbirth all unfolding futures, the challenge of lingering the now. Now, as if the snow were an acoustic aid spreading sound through its collective falling across one's mother's forests, one hears orchestral music from afar, dim and distant, the distance, one feels, of the belvedere or beyond, the violins disrupting the woodwinds' melody, one inclining one's ears to pick out the triangle, one suspecting one will only be able to detect a glockenspiel, or a xylophone, or a spoon against a champagne glass, or a gripped larynx. Then, the owls again, hunting a dialogue. One envies them their other, as one envies one's horses, as one envies the tracks of one's sleigh. Seldom does one envy the belvedere its lofty dominance. Love, under the guise of a moveable force, watersheds its way to the sea. One partakes of its debris flow, along the belvedere's spinal ridge, across the alluvial plane, off of the

locates love, of the epidermis or the marrow or the tangible soul, through sniffing and digging or barter or grace, one immolates a portion of a martyred self. As one goes to strike one's triangle, should one's triangle be handy and strikeable, one having put it in a spot where one could find it when one needed it, one renews one's acquaintance with one's poseable body. One's memory is air, one's imagination has form, that order of conceptual application. As a thought becomes coherent, it is rendered too vulnerable to survive, its cohesion too rigid—its knees and elbows won't bend. From one's sleigh one's wonder quiets history, hushing the future in its transversal wake, linearity collapsed into a waking dream narrative, the now as a self-inclusive spiral, the spiral of the all inclusive now. Out of nowhere one hears, as if through pretended memory, within one's head, not from one's external world, the sounds of symphonic rehearsal, one knowing one couldn't be hearing with one's ears because of one's environment, one's circumstances in the sleigh, the violins screeching like owls, one recognizing the glorious metallic sounds—rising above the tortured brass—of a triangle struck with unpackaged ferocity, the percussionist letting loose with new-found fury. Then the cough, buried under the swirl. Isolation smallens one. As a

continental shelf and into the subterranean trench of one's imagination. The horses halt, having brought one to the plank bridge over the frozen creek—swift only in thaw—one's father's frozen water, one's father's frozen wood. One urges them across without fanfare. At the fork in the lane, the horses move at an oblique angle to the belvedere, toward the lake's most remote and rugged shore. One places oneself in the corridor outside of one's childhood bedroom. Although it's daytime outside of the belvedere, the corridor is dark, its lamps still lit. The wallpaper, snowscened, has slight relief, one able to feel the patterned trees and sleighs and horses with one's fingertips. In the sleighs ¹⁴ sits a man in a purple and gold cloak, the colors appearing faded to lavender and goldenrod in the half-light, the rider either asleep or in stunned reverie. Putting one's nose to the wall, one tries to gaze into his eyes, to make contact, but his eyes are shut against the painted moonlight. One can't wake a wallpaper painting—on either side of the corridor—or rouse any of its duplicated characters from his solitary musings. The clouds have parted to allow moonlight onto the white surface of the lake. One remembers a walk to this far end of the lake with one's father, an early winter walk gone awry, words of

child, one dreamt of good company. As an adult, one dreams of good company. It isn't one's to know when good company dreams of one. If love were to come conversing, talking up a storm, one would seek higher ground, the belvedere's belltower, a spruce's crown, the amorphous expansive horsehead nebula of one's imagination. One's horse halts at a fork in the lane. The time to go home has either come and gone or is future flung or is fantast, the dangling carrot for a delusional heart. A homecoming isn't a homecoming without a homegoing, and a homegoing is flawed without the hope of a welcoming someone. One tells one's horse to ignore the wide lane that ushers visitors (there are seldom any visitors) and relatives (there are no longer any known relatives) toward the belvedere, and to instead veer off into the property's thickest woods, the darker forests, those most vulnerable to one's nostalgia for melancholy moments. One visits oneself within the brightness of the oriel, one claiming the status of self-observer, nearby, of elsewhere, the winter sunlight so intense one shields one's eyes from one's refractions, skin and floor resembling wood and flesh. Phantomhood eludes one, ever and always, one's corporeal weight undeniable, one's mass undenied, one's hourglass flipped. There, one of

inconsequence piled upon gestures of indifference, the sound of leaves under one's father's boots less loud than those under one's boots, one's father already half-skinned into paper, half gone to ash. One's no longer sleepy. One's tired of fictional dreams of the past, one more and more reticent to revisit leftovers of possibilities unfulfilled. Although one knows that the belvedere's stoops and walkways need shoveling—snow having fallen throughout the holidays and now beyond them—one's unconcerned. Let the snow fall and collect, and if it wishes, someday melt. It doesn't require one's intervention. One strings dimensionality through memory, memory as creative ¹⁵ volition, one not experiencing until the experience is remembered, one remembering only through imagining, the harmony of duration and distance, imagination as the tool of congruence. The family belvedere commands lower stories, strata upon which it resides, a foundation of porous stone, a dungeon of obsolescence. Its porticoed heights, its open view, even under winter clouds, affords the belvedere a peek at the horizon. If one lacks a belvedere, of the familial or antiquitous or make-believe variety, one could implant one into one's memory. There, unhindered by the unfolded world, it

one's hands, relaxed upon the wood, curls like a flower at night. One's asleep. One stoops to listen to one's breathing, to the almost inaudible nose whistle, to cannibalize one's dreams, if dreams there be, if one's subconscious is engaged, if it's penetrable by anything or anyone but itself. Moonlight penetrates a break in the clouds, silvering one's sleigh and the narrowing lane. One's no longer sleepy, although one lacks sleep. Lack affects and effects judgment, the gap from what's missing creating a blind spot, an urge to differentiate. The absence of love, say, represents a veil; the absence of God, a hood. A veil under a hood is redundant. One's concerned—within one's artifact coat, under one's coverlet, within one's sleigh, under the light of a refractive stone, within the darkest woods of one's land—not with one's condition as creator or creation, as dreamer or dreamt, as imaginer or imagined, but with one's purpose as maker or chronicler or percussionist, one wishing to unbecome without unbeing, one's existence and one's nonexistence mutually congruent. The family belvedere has a lowest story, the kitchen and rooms of inconsequence, above a basement of damp and junk. Its uppermost oriels, eyes to one's world, scan the treetops, coated white in winter, toward all cardinal points. One's belvedere, one knows, went the

matures. One's belvedere histories
itself throughout one's witnessing.
Without the belvedere, one hasn't
sleigh or horses or owls or oriels or
artifact coat. One might still have
snow. One *has* snow. For days on
end the snow has fallen upon one's
inconclusiveness. Now, as if it were
an incremental avalanche, the snow
has buried one's world in
breatheable white. One's lungs send
the unrepeated flake patterns
through one's bloodstream to one's
remembering, where one's efforts
not to differentiate prove futile, one
sensing the snowflakes' fanatical
insistence upon uniqueness, the
actuality of their existence—as with
grains of sand or mosquito hearts—
determining, from the outset, their
undeniable individuality. *Identical*
is an abstraction, a ridiculous
approximation, like *perfect* or *never*,
approaching fallacy. One isn't equal
to oneself. This knowledge, once
grasped, is forgotten. What's wholly
forgotten can't be remembered, but
must be re-imagined. Re-imagining,
like seamless big-bangings, is a pulse.
When the pulse ceases, it too can
be re-imagined. One carries one's
doubts—with their affectionate
resonances—in every little pocket of
one's faith. Whether one is riding in
a sleigh or standing on stage or
striding along in one's boots through
a snowy night, one suspects oneself
imagined. If one were to cross the

way of one's father and one's triangle.
One twisted out of it, reaching for
the vanishing point, as one might
twist out of one's shoes reaching for a
misplaced possession. The belvedere
stands, discarded, emptied of one
and one's crayoned hearth, atop
a hill of anyone's choosing.
Unaccompanied, except for the
cardboard fireplace one is carrying,
one stumbles across a snowbound
meadow. One hauls one's fake
warmth toward one's destiny. The
coals, not yet extinguished, would
scorch one's ribs if one were made
of paper. One's destination is
identifiable and unidentifiable,
never the same place from one of
one's jaunts to another. At one time
it's steep and craggy. At another, flat
and broad. Or, once thus, never thus
again, as is true of everything. To
differentiate one's path from someone
else's, one need only, as is said, *listen
to one's heart*. The uniqueness of one's
path doesn't rely upon characteristics,
but upon intuition, a flutter in one's
forgetting. One's either greater or less
than oneself, or one's greater *and* less
than oneself. One imagines oneself
into being through partial
unselfhood. One imagines oneself
out of being through partial selfhood.
One carries one's hearth—with its
hand-colored embers—across one's
snow-shrouded field of pocketed
belief. As one struggles along, always
on the verge of losing one's balance,

lake in early winter, the ice likely wouldn't hold one's weight. This deep into the freeze, however, one is safe from any threat of falling through and drowning, the lake's surface having hardened thicker than the belvedere's walls. One's horses whinny as they watch one leave, one having coaxed them onto the shoulder of the lane, one concerned that one might come along with one's one-horse sleigh and not be able to sidle past. It might be expected, on a night like this, out wandering on the expanse of a frozen lake, to parley with one's God, if one's God there be, if one's God is a conversationalist, or at the very least, a listener. One isn't without companion, even if one is without ¹⁷ God. One, as one, as not other, is inseparable from other, whatever other is, whomever one might think oneself. One's God, if one's God there be, imagines one into being, as one, and as other, and as none other than one. One of one's boots have come untied. After one stoops to remedy the problem, one feels a sudden affection for one's boots and one's hands, a fondness absent for one's horses or one's memories. One's boots, in their rounded sublimity—comfortable, reliable, unscuffed—shed water. One's hands, with their tendoned agility—confident, nimble, unscarred—cup snow. One's tongue accepts a cold clump. One's tongue,

one dreams of imagining oneself into future memory. If one has left one's sleigh and horse behind—whether abandoned in the property's darkest woods or snug and hayed within the stable's warmth—one feels no remorse, makes no apology, not even under one's breath. The horse is a corpse. The sleigh, a figment. One is crossing a field against its grain of fallen snow, one's breath is visible, one's heartbeat baritone in one's throat—one's concerns are for the moment, the ever weakening now, and one's marginal solitude. One requests one's God leave one alone. Thus far in one's life, from cradle to deathbed, one's wish has gone unheeded, or ungranted, or if granted, unapprehended. Neither one's father nor one's mother nor one's God incinerates within one's hearth. One's God isn't a corpse, isn't a figment, isn't a snowflake or a heartbeat or an owl. One's God isn't one. What one's God is, hasn't been and won't be. The laces of one of one's boots have come undone. Before one stoops to loop and twirl and tighten, one gingerly sets one's cardboard fireplace on a snow mound. There, while one conforms the laces, the embers melt the mound. One suddenly finds oneself up to one's ankles in slush. One takes stock. One isn't in one's sleigh, or in one's belvedere bed, or on the sunlit floor of one's oriel. One isn't on stage,

one imagines, could discern flake from flake, individuality from individuality, by taste or shape, if one were their maker, if one possessed the sensitivity of the creator for the creation. If one didn't invent the owls, it's unlikely one made the snow or the belvedere or the lanes or the forests. Nonetheless, one considers oneself an assembler, linking together the detritus of one's world, the scree of one's imagination. One wishes to be more concrete, to appreciate the spruces from the firs from the pines, bunched together along the lake's shores, surrounding one with oxygen and visual texture. The trees, without sound, tell one that one isn't their maker. The horses, whose snorts one hears across the distance, the beasts now resigned to their fates of beside-the-lane waiting, consider one their master, although one most likely isn't their maker, isn't even the fashioner of their harnesses or bits or bridles. If one were to become a blacksmith or saddler or horse breeder, one would have to endeavor beyond the bounds of one's inclinations, and one would risk skirting the meditative core of one's ambition. The tangible and the palpable are neither one's trophies nor one's thorns. In one's life, in anyone's life, either imagined as actual or actually imagined, there are moments of regret, or moments of potential regret. Regret, subservient to memory, like memory, is chosen.

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waiting to chime. One's alone, and not alone, in a snow laden field, deep into a night with scant inkling of dawn. One's God is neither origin nor destination. As receptacle of hope for immediacy, one's rendered hearth is one's covenant, one's scissors and crayon fashioned ark. Its cardboard has been dampened by the melted snow, so one cradles the hearth again in one's arms, welcoming its warmth along one's flank. Nevertheless, the unwelcome dampness now pervades one's lungs, the initial bud of a hacking cough that one will disavow by proxy. One wishes to be more concrete, to navigate one's walks by the stars, when the stars are visible, or by recognized trees, without resorting to marking them with knife or ribbons or studs, or by the shapes of unmelted snow mounds. One's orientation to the belvedere isn't known, not by one, and most likely isn't knowable in this weather, now that one's bearings are lost, unless one were to stumble upon a lane with sleigh tracks not fully obscured by freshly fallen snow. If these circumstances persist, one marvels, by and by one will perish, not through the physical constraints of starvation or exposure—one's imaginatively immune to those—but through the spiritual absence of promise. When promise becomes palpable and one's transcendence is tangible, one's home. In everyone's

When one chooses to leave the transport of one's sleigh and the loyal pull of one's horses to wander across a frozen lake, one rolls regret under one's tongue. One conjures a sunny conservatory, lofty and bedecked with plastic ferns, where one, rehearsing one's role as percussionist, sends sounds out across one's forests, one's mother's forests, one's mother's air, one pounding and scraping and whirling to one's heart's content in this room above the belvedere's hush, one's arms octopusing with one's efforts at persuasion, one striking this against that as a means of verifying shared distinctiveness. To create thunder with sheet metal is a privilege. To perpetuate a snowstorm with one's will is a stretch of the truth. The weather of one's world is as controllable as one's temperament, one's white moods, one snowing one's weather into monochromatic silence, one weathering one's snow out on the frozen lake. Now, if one's horses were to snort or whinny, one couldn't hear them, one having crossed the lake to its oblique shore, one palming a wooden apple, a gift from one's mother, extracted from a silk pocket. The apple is hollow, filled with appleseeds, and when shaken, rattles vibrantly. One remembers, as a child, having chewed on the stem. One finds it soothing, even now, to roughen the wood's smooth surface with one's teeth. As

life, one's imaginary and imaginative life, one insists upon losing oneself so that one might be found. The outcome must be in doubt even as the result is eventualized. All of one's efforts to wander astray go to waste if one doesn't conjure sufficient drifts of second-guessings, adequate acreage of uncertainty, a contingent spirit. One rolls one's satin sleeves to one's elbows when one thumps and clangs about in the belvedere's music room of upper wonder. To ply one's trade as percussionist, as with any craft or expertise, one must periodically practice to keep one's prowess and edge. The room, airy and sun-slashed, provides one solace, like one's oriel, but one seldom dozes amongst one's objects of wood and stretched hide and metal, one preferring to scrape and pummel and ting. One makes a joyful noise unto oneself, the rhythm of a lone heart amid abstruse patterns of connection. Now, out in the weather, snow collecting upon snow, one controls one's thoughts of one's lofted conservatory, keeping it sunny around-the-clock, day through day, a breeze from a childhood sea, the fake ferns swayed with a faker's constancy. One's adam's apple, one's audible swallow, gifts from one's mother, disconcert one with their rattlings, as if one's throat were on its way to becoming frozen. One puts one's palm against one's neck, under one's

an object from one's childhood, one thought the apple lost, until happening upon it while searching the cellar for a box of ornaments. Or, one found it in a knick-knack shop in the village and created a history between it and one and one's mother, a triangular nostalgia, one's teeth not marring its stem until now, *this* winter's night, while wondering where one should next go, along the lake's shore, haphazardly into the woods, back across the icepack to the sleigh, or home along the quickest path to the belvedere, one knowing one's horses are skeletons and are emancipated from one's care. One positions oneself to say goodbye to them, across a distance too genuine, the melancholy of leaving what's already been left. As one wanders one's woods, one's pulse thickening, one wonders, if one were to come upon oneself as corpse, after the stroke and the swoon and the crumple and the passing, frozen beyond resuscitation or cremation or beaks or jaws or mandibles—one aware of the eventual likelihood of mandibles—whether one would possess the wherewithal to dig oneself a grave, to provide oneself a standard four by six by eight burial with patted soil and marker, a stone-scratched epitaph without pronoun or pronouncement or profundity, one promising to place artificial blossoms on the site the next good chance one

silk scarf, one aware of one's reimagined pulse, one hoping to warm one's throat through to one's nape, to loosen the waters, to smooth one's swallow. When something is said to be lost, the language allows for implications of future foundness. A contest, once truly lost, can't be won. A lost button, however, might show itself should one someday move the furniture to sweep. A lost child is never given up as lost, unless found, safe or dead. When something is said to be dead, there is rarely insinuation of reversal into life. One is lost in the woods, but one will, one supposes, in some capacity, in some span of time, even if as corpse or artifact, be found. If one's soul is said to be lost, it matters whether the soul is considered to most closely resemble a contest or a button or a child. The soul doesn't resemble, not even itself. As a way of provoking oneself, to prod one's witnessing, one begins to imagine stumbling upon oneself as corpse, one having inexplicably wandered away from one's horses and sleigh, one now slumped against a tree and coated with snow, one's thoughts frozen shut, one's imagination gone elsewhere, one wondering if one would possess the gumption to cremate oneself in the hearth—the stoked hearth—and to pocket a handful of the ash—since one isn't toting an urn—and to scatter the bulk of it

gets. One's mother was buried, one's father was cremated. Or, one's mother ran off with the circus and one's father is at home scrutinizing his dictionaries and awaiting one's prodigal cry. All of this, one's life, one's memories, one's galavanting through the woods, one's inklings and projections, one's fibbings and distillations, one's phantomhood pretensions, one's self-pitying self-righteousness and ideological jugglings, one's imaginings and contradictions, all amount to rising wind prayer. One is wandering in one's woods, one isn't at sea. One isn't battening hatches. Analogies disappoint. One stands with one's hands on one's hips, trying to orient oneself to the belvedere, or to the lake, or to one's sleigh and horses, one sniffing the frosty air, as if that could do any good. One's lost, and even when one comes upon a lane stretching into the snowy distance, the lane is unmarred, without prints or tracks, a lane one doesn't recognize. Still, it must go somewhere, and it might connect to lanes one knows. What one knows, and what one is capable of knowing one knows, constantly shifts. This shift, if truly constant, if contained within the world, congeals or eliminates knowledge, binds it in time or space. If one's knowledge is held within oneself, one can't know one's knowing in the way one can't see

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across a snowfield while watching the fresh white quickly occlude the gray, and to utter a smattering of words as tribute to that self one hardly knew. One's father was cremated, one's mother was buried. Or, one's father is traveling on belvedere business and one's mother is awake in the dark baking a cake. All of this, one's childhood, one's dreams, one's galavanting through the woods, one's beliefs and suppositions, one's frettings and obfuscations, one's rooting for losers, one's theological masturbations and philosophical philanderings, one's observations and contradictions, all reduce to doldrums prayer. One is wandering in one's woods, one isn't at sea. One isn't lusting for full sail. Metaphors fail. One clutches one's cardboard hearth to one's chest, fond of its warmth, knowing it won't keep one from perishing, knowing one's fate isn't to perish. The snow falls without slant. The night is without breeze. One's horse isn't under one, isn't at one's shoulder, isn't out in front of one's sleigh, loyal, long suffering, skeletal, pulling one toward morning. Still, one has one's legs, one's snow boots, one's portable hearth. What one protects, when one thinks of self, is one's concept of autonomy. One's self requires boundaries for it to possess definition, and because one must place oneself in the world, the things

one's seeing. As one is unable to see in the woods at night—clouds and snowfall block the moonlight—one follows the unknown lane wherever it may lead, one choosing one direction over the other by rapid whim. It isn't as if one wishes to get anywhere, one content to wander labyrinthine lanes all night, all of one's experience, until fate's intervention, until thaw and bloom, or until one's death. One shakes one's wooden apple as one strides. Or, the wooden apple is shaken by the motion of one's arm as one strides, one struggling to keep one's equilibrium, the snow on the ground and the snow in the bowers and the snow in the air beginning to merge. Even after one tucks the apple back into the seclusion of one's coat pocket, it rattles with one's efforts to stay mobile. The percussive apple makes one think of one's rack of objects in the music room—although on stage, without amplification, the seeds' sounds would be too subtle. Within this scenario of snow and exertion, of apple and imagination, one resolves to do better with truth, to recognize truth and accept truth, to embrace truth and remember truth, to be true to truth, if truth there be. The resolution is made suspect, one knows, by its ending clause, its permanent doubt. The truth of the matter is that matter isn't truth. One is body. One is spirit.

of the world must likewise hold definition. One is permeable, and one is distinct, as is true of every object, every life. A stray thought, an odd sensation, seeps into one as one slogs through the snowy woods. If one were to scream at the top of one's lungs, or if one had a gun to fire into the air, even repeatedly, nobody, almost assuredly, beside one's self, would hear. All people, at one time in their lives, should experience this sensation—being outside at night, in the elements, out of earshot of anyone, of everyone but self. Unable to resist the temptation, albeit indirectly—one not toting a gun, one not wishing to startle oneself with a blood-curdling scream or even a landsliding yodel—one begins to sing, operatically, to the extent one's lungs and larynx permit, one inventing melody and libretto on the spot, off the cuff, whimsical and bemusing, one belting one's creation out across one's snowscape. Without audience or orchestra or conductor, one nonetheless maneuvers one's aria toward a triangle moment. One is hackneyed. One was born, one lives, and one will die. An ancient and contemporary plot. If not classic, then hackneyed. The tried and true and tired paradigm. The way it was, the way it is, the way it will be. One sings about this, tongue-in-cheek, one's weak tongue and one's thin cheek, one stopping only to catch

One is soul. The body matters until it doesn't. The spirit inhabits matter until it doesn't. The soul makes matter matter, exposing it as an insufficient something. Suddenly, one hears singing in the distance—melody, like story, is memorable, identifiable, transferable, able to be passed from one to another as a communicable disease. One's world is tangled with convergence. To the best of one's mobility, one angles away from the sound, not wishing to encounter its source, although the sour singing soon ceases. A life becomes another not because they're interchangeable, but because there exists simultaneous matter within one life and any other. The transposition comes in the connection. If it could be shown that everything is temporal, even if eternal, there could be no differentiation, and therefore nothing *and* all. When one invents one's mother and one's father, should one be allowed to invent them, one will make them equal to life (not larger than life, not responsible for one's failings, one's imaginings). One's mother is buried under a spruce along the far bank of the belvedere's lake. Or, as she faded in the sun—caught between windowpanes—she disappeared from one's observations. One's mother bred nostalgia into one, but now, as memory, induces

one's breath or to catch snowflakes upon one's tongue. One is alone. One is companioned. One sings one's song aloud to oneself until one wearies of its lack of range, its lack of focus, its lack of sufficient nothing. Suddenly, one hears a rattlesnake, or a maraca, knowing either would be absurd in these wintry woods, knowing one, whomever one is, will eventually intersect one's world. But not now, not yet—the inevitable can be delayed, but not indefinitely, postponed, but not prevented, put off until another time but not erased from time altogether. Among the forested hush, one likes the sound of one's swallow, one able to discern what it feels like to be about to swallow from what it feels like to have just swallowed, one wholly within oneself, focusing on the build of tension between swallows, the increase of need until the necessary release, that fundamental cycle. When one invented one's father and mother, *if* one invented them, one buried their flaws out of sight, one tempered their edges with blown flame, the two of them together equaling one's image. One's father, as memory, is specific and generic, concocted and conglomerated, fictional and authentic, as is everyone's father, as is everyone's mother, as is everyone. One's father bred melancholia into one, but now as memory, induces nostalgia. A

melancholia. One doesn't want her renewal to one, but one's renewal to her, to be in her thoughts, her daydreams, her kitchen comings and goings, her apron pocket, if she wears aprons. One's mother is a prime number, as is one, but one is one, divisible by oneself and one, the two ones being equal when all is said and done, while one's mother is divisible by herself and one, two distinct divisors. What one most fears (most nights) is a sudden inability to differentiate one's mother from one's father, the two merging into one so that one believes in a solitary maker, a self-imagined origin. One has assigned meanings to the fabrications of one's life, banal to epiphanal, corroborated or delusional, plucked from a star or salvaged from a grave, one measuring one's cantilevered span, one charting the locations of one's residual bones. One's born into the grave, one's mother's token womb, one sunny winter's day, bare-spirited, heavy-souled, one's heart pounding back at the sun. If one is never truly without companion—whether one considers a triangle to be triple-sided (straights between angles) or double-sided (interior and exterior)—one's aloneness is like an object's stasis in that it exists within a perspective which finds it difficult witnessing the world beyond itself. One moves oneself away from oneself.

longing for the subtle and arresting aromas of his clothing and his favorite objects provoke one to wear his artifact coat, to wear it indoors and out, in sleigh and in bed, to nap with one of his dictionaries as a pillow, to sniff the trees of the corridor's wallpaper in the dark and distinguish them as one was taught, spruce from pine, pine from fir, fir from spruce. What one most fears (most nights) is a gradual inability to differentiate one's father from one's mother, the two blending into one until one's faith is in a solitary maker, a self-prophetic future. One will ascribe meaning to the burning of one's life, the incessant bellows, the flames in the creases, the eventual scattered death, one witnessing each spark and curl, every blackened word, one's whole paper self transformed (turned to ash) by its lack of sustainable moisture. One projects oneself into the air above one's forests, to witness one's father's image rise in the smoke of one's conflagration. A persistent winter within one's world—the winter enduring through spring and summer and encroaching upon its own birth at the trailing off of autumn—will show one's imagination that across the gulf between any one and any other, what one knows (as opposed to what one thinks one knows) spans half of the distance all of the time. One moves oneself away from oneself.