

KEYS WITHOUT A LOCK

by

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"Keys Without a Lock"

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ABSTRACT

This collection represents the poems I have had published or accepted for publication to date. The title, “Keys Without a Lock,” is a line taken from the poem “Mabel’s Bed.” The poem is about preparing my grandmother’s house for auction, and the things I found in closets and cupboards, so the title has a literal meaning. It also has a figurative meaning, in that we sometimes find the tool we need long after we can use it, whether it is understanding, perspective, forgiveness, or some other awareness we gain in the course of a life. The poems are largely narrative; although most of the poems begin with a real memory, they are not literally true, but are true to a feeling, idea or experience. They are divided into four roughly chronological sections. “Riding Clipper Ships” is mostly about, or remembering, childhood; “Bumping on Cobblestone” is mostly about moving to Ohio, “Eating the Round Bones” is mostly about what happened after that, and “Sipping Moonshine” is mostly about imagining or wishing for something that hasn’t happened. Each section has an epigraph relating to some of the poems, and the section titles are taken from a poem within that section. The poems are in free verse, with the exception of “Driving to the James Wright Poetry Festival and Coming Home” (sonnet), “Mabel’s Bed” (rhyming couplets), “To a Love” (sonnet), and “White Christmas” (pantoum).

Thanks to the editors of the following magazines, where these poems have appeared:

Allegheny Review: “Arcos de la Frontera”

Angle: “After Magritte’s *Empire of Lights*,” “To a Love”

Apple Valley Review: “Wisconsin”

DMQ Review: “Driving to the James Wright Poetry Festival and Coming Home”

Icon: “Bank of Days,” “First Peach,” “Walking at Dawn,” “The Way of Autumn”

Innisfree: “For the Boys”

kaleidowhirl: “Church Bells,” “Church Music”

Main Channel Voices: “Making Eggs”

Mid-America Poetry Review: “Illusion”

Pennine Ink: “Morning With Headache”

PL&LR: “Dream”

Poetry Midwest: “Mabel’s Bed”

Primavera: “Being You,” “The Causeway”

Susquehanna Review: “Lunacy,” “Signs,” “The Swing”

The Cooweescoowee: “White Christmas”

The Fourth River: “The Viking and the Field Mouse”

Versal: “Bonsai”

Visions-International: “Stars Below Us”

Youngstown State University Penguin Review: “After Gustav Klimt’s *The Kiss*,”
“Non-traditional Student,” “Farmer’s Market”

Many of these poems were written for poetry writing workshop classes under the aegis of William Greenway and Steven Reese.

Riding Clipper Ships

I will never run again, except in dreams.
-Nancy Mairs

The Swing

*How do you like to go up in a swing, up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it's the pleasantest thing ever a child could do.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By a duck pond with stout white
geese and a rocky field of morning
glories, my fifth house, not a house
really, but a trailer with cold water
baths and a door that unlatched
if you leaned on it. Tiny fixed things

and he pushed kids on the swings
when he happened by. I was truly
tiny, and asked him, in small words,
not too high, but he laughed
and launched me, a satellite,
into thin air, too thin for breath.

Hang on. Squeeze your hands
around the chain but don't squeeze
shut your eyes. Look hard.
When you come down and see only
dirt beneath your feet, when you are flying
back and can't see the where, *then*
close your eyes, *then* see how big
the world is, and you within it.

Signs

Go to where the snakes are, the reptile house,
read the signs that don't tell you the way snakes
come up through the cabin floor when you are
alone. If you have a phone in your hand, try
calling someone. No one will answer.

Learn the names of snakes that live in glass
houses. You can't name the pink ones, in
the driveway, coiled tall as a girl, but know,
somehow, that you must walk between
without arousing them. Feel the danger, unnamed.

The smiling snakes that live near signs show
no trace of menace that chases you down
halls, up stairs, run, into a room, heave the door
shut, lock it, hurry, shove towels into the space
beneath, and turn around to see the snake slide
in the second floor window and you in a trap
of your own making.

Morning With Headache

It's the medicine I wish for them,
for my grandfather who died before
I could love him, for the painters
and poets who'd be cured with
a handful of pills. My brother
would have succumbed to the pneumonia
that made us cough and inhale steam
in his little room, our fevers riding
the clipper ships in the prints until
we were well enough for Monopoly
that lasted for days, before we
returned to school. A festering
appendix would have been the end
of me, no surgeons, tubes, green jello
but prayers, bloodletting, a little
coffin. This morning I hold my head
still, not bending or thinking,
as the pill races to release
the stab and grip, I set my small
prayer into the early air.

Making Eggs

My father's whites
would pop and bubble,
high heat egging the skillet
on, heavy-handed salt
and peppering, the smoke
from cigarettes, bacon,
burned toast in his greasy
hair. My mother scrambled
eggs into dry bits, no
salt, her toast
from airy bakery bread.
My eggs are soft,
the whites bend, turn,
melted yolk drains
over the plate,
the warm skillet cooling.
No one gets hurt.

For the Boys

The girls with clean shoes and Barbies
had *rules*, couldn't sleep out with us,
didn't have their lawns spoiled by
baseball in summer, football
in fall, garden hose flooding for winter
skating. The boys didn't seem
to notice I was a girl, maybe short
hair and bruised knees were camouflage
enough, they welted me with dodge balls
just the same. I liked their talk, and trouble,
learned things I shouldn't know like
what happens when you pour water
on a gasoline fire, and how it is to have
your wind knocked out. Mostly the wind
was behind us as we rode our bikes
down topsoil cliffs, leaped off
swings into space. Like the boys at the pier
who taught me to fish
for bait from the bucket, calling me
Worm Woman with a bit of pride,
they raised me, found a place for me
when I had no fishing stuff of my own.
I want those boys to know
that my daughter can change her own oil,
and that I am almost never afraid.

Church Music

I followed the minister
around camp, asking
about God, the minister
smiled and sent me
off to crafts. *We'll talk,*
he said, but when
on the last day
I was distraught that I
hadn't caught a fish,
he took me fishing
in the rain.

I understand now:
we are fishers of fish
not fishers of men.
It's such a waste
a woman tells me. *If*
you don't go to church, you
won't get to heaven.

I want Wallace Stevens'
Sunday morning, the scent
of oranges, moods
in snow, the dance
of pagans in some primordial
dream. I heard
of a pipe organ lover
who traveled west
to buy pipes.

They were too big
for the car, so he
strapped them to the roof,
and through many states,
let the wind
play them home.

Arcos de la Frontera

I spent my seventeenth summer in the south
of Spain, whitewashed village perched
on a mountain over
an ancient river, knotted
olive trees. I grew dark in the Mediterranean
air, though not like
my friends whose ancestor Moors
mixed their blood
with the Guadalquivir River below us.
Though it is too long ago to remember
the stars, I remember cool
tile floors Bob Dylan's *Mozambique*
sashaying down the hall mixing
with the smell of eggs
and potatoes frying in olive oil.
Antonio Machado exhaled
from my friends, they knew ancient dances,
twisting and snapping like kites.
They carried their sorrow, these sun-
stained people, who drew me in
to this heady place of olive trees
and poetries, I am still knotted
with leaving.

Bumping on Cobblestone

they do not use the stairs, the spirits of your ancestors,
they. do not. use. the stairs.

–Diane Di Prima

In the Garden, Spring

I remember well that day,
A harsh April wind undermined the sun.
Your wheelchair bumped on new cobblestone.
Tulip and robin spoke no promise.
I fed you as you once fed me.
Why does your September birthday remind me?
I mark your death in springs.

Mabel's Bed

Her fierce possession kept us long at bay,
then brought us here to carry things away
without her stories. Gently sorting letters,
receipts and budgets, wishes, lists of debtors,
the boxes deep with postcards sent to Mabel
from sister Cinderella. At the table
we spoke in truths. The generations now
behind us left their faces, told us how
they taught their children, went to war, and wed.
The recipes and paintings, desk and bed,
and when I put my hand in a high drawer
I found my grandpa's teeth, stepped back in horror,
he teased me often with those teeth. He'd have loved
to make me laugh another time. A trove:
McGuffey Readers full of math and rhyme,
a chest with leather handles, Amy's clock,
some gaudy vases, keys without a lock,
a sailor suit. They all were piled outside.
We bled our heirlooms, strangers touched them, tried
to keep from looking at us. Mother cried
and snuck things back into the house. Next year
Grandmother died, her nursing fees were cleared.
A sorrow settled on us soft as snow,
as cold, although from there we did not know
that everything we sold could have been kept,
the wooden bed of dreams where Mabel slept.

First Peach

My favorite jeans slip on, fit
after cold months' lethargy, new
music in the kitchen keeps me
there after dishes are done.
Snipped-tag gloves, fingertips
unpierced by thistle, new
garden fork slides
nice like a mason's knife,
plantain gives up
with an easy pull. Clouds
have fallen from my childhood
drawings, sheep walk
in sky blue, a plane
overhead has left me home.
Home, Saturday soft, a place
I can't always find but never
stop looking for, the way
the kitchen mice walk
past the squash and potatoes
all winter, waiting for the first peach.

Renters

The renters left, maybe in the night, though no one knew until the overdue gas bill came screaming at my aunt, the family's reluctant landlord. Broken junk, rusty appliances filled the little house, mold deep in the cupboards, dog piss soaked in the porch wood, grass grown up around the arbor, deep mucky ruts in the curving driveway. We hire someone to clean it out and tiptoe through the brick bungalow built for Lucretia, my great great-grandmother. My mother lived here, too, her voice quiets as she looks hard from each window, during the war they sent letters to her Navy father, in one her mother drew X's. Put some kisses in from me, too, she asked, but these were X's on a snake warming on the sidewalk, she sweeps her hand across the memory. I remember a gray-skinned mother, too many children with bare and dirty feet like mine, my grandmother scolding We don't fraternize with the renters. I can see my life in this house, a deep chair or two on the porch, my glass pitcher in the kitchen near the cut lemon shells on their way to the compost by the arbor, heavy with clematis, the garden lush with lavender, tomatoes, basil, the attic-turned-guest room fresh with sunlight, clean sheets on the bed beneath an Amish quilt, my guest arriving. But like Lucretia, my mother and renters in the night, I can't stay.

Walking at dawn

The dawn is clear, not misty, a line of color
in the trees. My shoes are wet with pasture dew.
A tiny air force of bats makes the last
rounds as I, coffee cup in hand, never tire
of loving this place. I remember a fear
of isolation. I learned that solitude is not
loneliness. I feel it most in these moments,
when geese fly in so low they can hear me
whisper. When the sinking sun coats the grass
with melted metal, glimmering flecks float
through the space between tree trunks
at the height of children. Toads like half-blown
balloons and tips of baby snakes move ahead
of me. I step lightly. The ground hog bends
wild grass to nibble seed, and I make bread.
Wildflowers, finches and the bride mist
rising off the lake distract me from my internal
undertow. Owl sounds and moonlight
in my bedroom window alter my dreams.
The endless motion of mice in the barn
remind me of essential work. On a day
of faltering, a bluebird came and stood near me.
In that space behind my sternum, I feel
longing to fly. My neighbor's horse loves it
here, too, in the pasture where I walk on a clear
dawn, after a night of standing under stars and stars.

For Mabel

You were six years dead and I just
born but I know your stories, your
work-bent back, laying hens, peach
pies you couldn't hide, your dahlias
the size of *dinner plates* tells
my mother. Stories of my great
grandfather Latimer, your husband,
disheveled wild man in gingerly
touched photos. This was your young
Lattie who, in your one hundred-
year old diary, after a ride
in the sleigh, was too shy to
come in. I feel your breaking
apart when Lattie died young, lost
in a snowstorm, so close you might
have heard him call. I walk
these floors now, cut for you
by Lattie of maple and oak
from our woods. On your thick
wooden table I cut peaches
to make pies, though the peach tree
is gone. My raw grief has filled
these rooms, my hands have worked
in soil near the ghosts of your dahlias.

Church Bells

I.

The sprawling, misplaced suburban church at the corner has wide black parking lots and an electronic carillon. Cars go whizzing by with windows closed, and I am the only one to hear, working in these farmhouse gardens. I prefer the bells of wrens.

II.

We stand in snow, two aunts, my mother and me, as the procession approaches the small wet opening, the undertaker in his long black wool coat, then two Dickens characters carrying shovels. The undertaker gives a respectful eye to my young aunt and she nods. My grandmother's miniature thumbs, professionally swirled hair, pained knees and all her own teeth, everything in a jar, lowered by one pair of hands, and the shovels make stabs at the loose soil.

III.

We go back in summer, my mother and I, there are puffs of hydrangea, and mildew on the leaves of ancient lilacs, my mother remembering, Everett, Elliott, Parke, Blair, there the nurse that came to deliver the stillborn, here the piano teacher.

Over a black stone etched COLE
she says, *she told my mother*
that each of us kids was
better than the one before. I ask
her, the oldest, how she knew.
She says, *My mother told me.*

IV.

I work in these gardens, bury
the scraps of my living, black
coffee grounds, apple seeds, cores
and fibers, fed to the decomposers,
stirred in to feed the roots.
The young lilac reaches toward
my bedroom window, the old lilac
leans against the shifting milk
house. The wren's song stops
me, leads my eye to the tiny pocket
nest, back to my work. I go on
digging, hearing the dead,
the church bells play for no one.

Illusion

A single hair fell
half way into the white
sink, and stopped,
floating over
nothing but a slim
web, scarcely visible.
It did not struggle
to be free
to fall of its own
accord nor tie itself
in knots searching for
worth. The fine web
did not resent the weight
of the hair or let go of its
delicate fate.

Eating the Round Bones

Emotions attach themselves either to the metaphors we invent
or to the things we've actually seen, but in the mind,
they all seem to be the same.
—Timothy Liu

Bonsai

Toward the end of the marriage
he bought bonsai trees.
She did not speak when he worked
bent over the kitchen table,
twisting copper wire and its numbered
thicknesses. He did not trust
the trees' growing, the uneven lifting
of the branches chafing
together like children reaching for love.
He watered them in meted drinks
to make them grow old in small
dishes. She brought him mail,
a box of tiny Buddhas,
he set each one in the slim shade.
He checked beneath the leaves
of the little trees, moved their limbs
in and out of traction, misted
the breath around them. Even
after she left, she did not know
what to do with her arms.

Wisconsin

You gave me letters from your car
in the hot courthouse parking lot.

I gave you things for our daughter,
pictures, hangars, books.

To lawyers we told our marriage
like an event in history, a war, or

hurricane, an era. I
see it in reverse, the end

begins it. You get off your knees,
tears slip into your eyes,

apologies pour back into your
mouth, then angry words unhurling

and endless disappointment. Our
teenagers give up their despair

and soft and small, climb into my lap.
I read to them, and they become

my lap, lovely mysterious movement.
I lay my wedding bouquet back

in the white box, the justice
of the peace goes home, and you ask

if I would go with you to Wisconsin.
I hold my breath and listen.

Dream

He is kissing her neck, slipping
his hands beneath her shirt,
when she wakes he will live
with another. She eats
canned salmon outside
in the yellow chair, fishes
out the round bones, eats
those first. It is a most
perfect day, she closes
her eyes to remember
the dream. Couples walk
up and down the country
road, the neighbor boys
gas up their motorbikes,
a family fishes from
the cracked sidewalk
that snakes beneath
the lake. Even the birds
have time to stand
in the trees and sing.

Non-traditional Student

I changed my major at 40, stuffed
everything I'd need to survive

on a desert island into my new
backpack and joined that tribe

of nomads, The Undergraduates.
The professors were my age,

remembered Johnny Quest, Joni
Mitchell, told jokes, like summer

camp for grown ups, the way
they made us sit down and read

in the middle of the day. It was
the most fun I've ever had.

At graduation I put on the long
black dress, we looked like a thousand

mourners, the speaker told us
we were like eagles. *I believe I can fly*

sang the p.a. system. I whispered
to the guy next to me, *Wasn't that*

the theme song of Icarus? He asked,
Who? and I remembered that we

only know a little more than we
used to know. He's itching to find

a job in the Real World. I'm staying
as long as I can.

Being You

I will remember you in Paris looking up
into the Eiffel Tower's iron lace between
its enormous planted feet. How quick you
were to laugh in Paris, in London, in lovely,
lonely, windswept Wales, singing silent
karaoke with me on the plane, one speaker
around your ear, one around mine,
*hey everybody have you heard, she's gonna
buy me a mockingbird.* Maybe if I'd imagined
us in Paris, you eating my olives, me eating
your cucumbers, I wouldn't have married
so soon, would have stayed in school,
would have taken another year of French
so I could explain to the shopkeeper my lost
lens cap. *J'ai perdu mon chapeau*
I said with a shrug and everyone asking
if we are sisters. We were sisters in Paris, lost,
flirting with the waiter, you practicing your French,
oh la la, and in London, walking me to the hotel
after too much wine, me talking too loud, saying
on the elevator *is this fun or what?* and you
laughing because everyone thought I meant
the elevator. You like style, I like jeans, I like
squibbly food, you say *no heads*.
You say you're becoming your mother. I'm
becoming you and it's like that with my daughter
too, the sea, the saw, the nursery, the rhyme,
the tide, the moon.

Farmer's Market

*They put us on an anthill, my friend laughs,
wiping her legs under a table of garlic,
hot peppers, cucumbers she picked in dew.
Three guys from the university are playing
jazz, sultry. I'm swooning, I say. It's the garlic,
she says back. At the next table, peaches,
you smell them everywhere. A shoulder-round
woman tells me about her banana bread,
somebody selling kitchen things and there's
the blender I've been looking for, with a heavy
glass carafe. The husband, deep in a lawn chair,
says *It works. If you need it, it's a hundred bucks.
If you don't, it's five.* He winks. I buy a small
stack of Bavarian ice cream dishes, tiny gray
flowers and a silver rim, little plates for sugar
cookies. Someone's cooking bbq ribs, and there's
sweet corn and rat-tail beets, blueberries,
basil, muffins and tie-dye. The baby I saw
last autumn is walking from the hip,
Jean from Marketing rides her bike down,
Jim and Pat ask me how the kids are and it's
half way to winter at the farmer's market
but you'd never know it, the handles
of my bags stretching long off my fingers,
my friend calling after me, *see you next week.**

The Causeway

I

To make the reservoir, the story goes,
they dug up a small cemetery. The son
came to identify the body, twenty
years interred. All he knew was the wedding ring.

II

The swallows are in cursive flight over fishermen
in ball caps and Mennonites in straw hats on the shore.
The wives' bonnet strings blow back in
the motorboat steered by a suspended son.
A sports car sails by, throbbing bass, the driver's
arm out the window.

III

My friend's wife lies on a white sheet. Her blood
has burst its pipe and pooled in her brain. He waits
for the doctor to tell him that she will have to learn
what babies know, or that her life flowed out,
leaving the blood to cool. Between email vigils
I walk the causeway.

IV

Along the shallows, one heron creeps in muck, the other
stands an old man shrug on a rock, turning its head
to keep me in its black eye. When they fly, they beat
down hard to lift their weight, the water is upset.
Their voices rattle. They ripple the air like sting rays.

Bank of Days

Her mother-in-law was done living
for a decade, then wheezed out several

months more, telling everyone
who would listen she was ready to die.

We called my stepfather a medical
miracle: a ward of the state, growing

bloated on daytime TV and vodka,
making prank calls to his ex-wife

every couple days. I'm starting a bank
of days, underused living, donations

get a tax credit and something named
after you, maybe an angel wing.

We appropriate the days to Walt,
who, at 83, had to stop gliding

so he could die of cancer, Julia,
full of new bone marrow and prayer

who writes to me on lavender
paper from Brazil, my brother's

too-small baby who has lived long enough
to say our names, Betty, pulsing her life

out on machines, with a book
and a marriage to finish.

Driving to the James Wright Poetry Festival and Coming Home

For Sal

We packed our poems and drove along the river
looking for the sign for Martins Ferry
and you were hearing stories of my father
and morning glory fields in morning where we

lived when I was five. The way you drive
so clean between the lines, unlike the water
running brown beside its banks, it will arrive
with more than when it started. What I saw turn

was time, the clocks on buildings old with brick,
the towns, the child who plays in morning glories
grown, and wheels are spinning forward quick
and know where they are going, over stories.

You turn to tell me *It will be alright.*
We stop for water, drive on in the night.

Sipping Moonshine

Men can die of imagination.
—Chaucer

Lunacy

Lovers, that's what makes
the moon full, I told her,
longing makes it new, and
wax will go round in sunlight's
reflection. The cow that jumped
over is still there, sipping moon-
shine between tides.
That's why we smile and say
cheese when standing
in moonlight. Moons ago
in June, even you heard
the loon lunacy. That blue
moon filled my room
with white light and shifting
shadow. Ask me for the moon
and I will show you ten
moons you carry on your fingertips.
When your love for him
is not eclipsed, your lover will
pour honey on the moon
'til it's full.

The Viking and the Field Mouse

It's getting too crowded in here with the woman looking down from above saying something about a metamorphosis and the brown shell cracking, the raging father, the grandmother with her pursed lips, the Viking and the field mouse, the lost children. It reminds you of a play when the stage is full and everyone's singing at once and you know you won't know what's going on until the end. Maybe in the costume room there's a wig and some red lipstick, but your house feels all wrong anyway, with its wall-to-wall carpet and what you really want is that old, drafty house with the fireplace, your jazz ringing off the bare floors, your one easy chair and reading light next to the fire and the skinniest chicken in the oven. Someone has given you a kitten, no, you are decidedly alone, and the kitten found you, it wandered around for weeks in the country, no, you are in the unknowing city and you found the kitten, all scruffy from city living, and you blow on little pieces of skin and fat from the scrawny chicken and you and the kitten think maybe you need some birds and a fig tree.

The Way of Autumn

The way the forecast told of dark clouds,
drizzle, seemed more true than the way
the sun lit hills of trees, dull golds, rusts.
The way she told him she would drive
slowly, had she told him? But the roads were
new and wide and he was thinner than she
remembered, she needed to get home.
The way it was too warm to bring in fire
wood, but the dried leaves walked up and
down the driveway, made her look out at no
one. The way he stood over her and said
the last thing he wanted her to know.

After Magritte's *Empire of Lights*

The light draws down
on a blue clouded

curtain behind the low
house and trees in thickening

shadow, the sky will turn
from Parrish blue to black

with stars. The man
in the house is reading,

perhaps, or touching
the woman for the first

time, watching the candle
light play on his hands flat

against her, hearing
the water outside break

in his ears like this touch,
he lowers himself to her

like the silent sun. The house huddles
around its lamp, shivering

the water with a moon of light,
refusing the darkness.

Stars Below Us

When I cross his path like an open ladder, like confused black cats, criss-crossing, he speaks the incantation, summons the car keys. I demand punishment for the keys, missing again, now we are late, but he says *no, being lost is not a sin.*

When my spine dissolves and I disappear, gliding low above the floor, in and out of sealed boxes of addresses I have outlived and dresses I have outgrown, he reaches into a drawer, pulls out Invisible Woman Glasses he sent away for, 3 UPC codes and a subway token, lures me out of the photograph with promises of chocolate and fine kisses.

When my unscheduled tide rises, he wades in, leaves his shoes on the shore, steps deep and deep until he is floating above me, immersed, long man legs straight over me, gentle breast stroke, breathing for us both, until the tide recedes and we lie and peer into pools, starfish below, the reflection of real stars in our eyes.

To A Love

How satisfied with life before I came
to love you. Freedom heretofore unknown
and knowing self, connecting to a name,
before, unknown. My blankets, pillows thrown
in waking, solitary dream of flowers
grown in light. How unimagined your
arrival. Contemplating through the hours
the making room in closet, desk and drawer,
and more, the clearing out of what is saved,
is mine, the fear of losing what is new.
You danced with me. I learned that I was brave
and loved and free. And you are too. And so
I'll say these things to you when we are old
if I should meet you. Winter here is cold.

After Gustav Klimt's "The Kiss"

His yellow, back-lit stained
glass cloth curves
around her cloisonné,
her arching feet
in a garden tapestry
surrounded by gold
leaf night. Who does
not feel the russet
flush of trust
in her face? His dark
skin taken by her
pale fingers, his
hands turning her
toward him. Who cannot
hear this nearly
silent kiss, nor feel
the way she
leans on his
brace around her
nape. In a moment
his free hand will
smooth her
breast, she will
sigh a sound across
the kiss. Her light
craves this
flowered rug, this
sable man,
this release
to the many shapes of him.

White Christmas

I will make the white Christmas
I saw in the magazine,
white flame on thin candles,
crystal goblets of wine.

I saw in the magazine
guests in white sweaters
holding goblets of white wine,
cream dishes on lined tables.

The white-sweatered guests
will be content, laughing,
lined tables and cream dishes,
windows white with Christmas snow.

Contentedly humming
Christmas music, my guests
will fill me. Christmas snow
softens the white ground.

My guests love Christmas music
and there is no talk of leaving.
The softened ground holds holly.
No one is dying.

I saw in a magazine
the Christmas I will make,
when no one is dying,
thin flame on white candles.