WINTER

Patricia Fargnoli

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in memory and with love
CONTENTS

I

Should the Fox Come Again to My Cabin in the Snow  1
Hunger  2
Still, silence moves me to speak  4
Old Man Wearing Vegetation  5
February Pre-dawn  7
Winter Grace  8
The Horse  9
Horses Seen from a Distance  10
When will the cows come home?  11
The Letter  13
The Weight  14
Pity  15
Galway  16
Winter  17

II

The Precious Book  21
Biography from Seventy-Four  22
Notions  25
Father Poem: a Collage  26
Eighth Grade Graduation Party  30
Riding the Cog Railway up Mount Washington  32
Night Thoughts  34
Sixty Years after My Mother’s Death  35
Depression  36
Advice for the Sleeping Lady  37
At Allen Brothers Garden Center  38
Bellows Falls  41
Watching the Night-Blooming Cereus Open  44
The Guest  45
III

After “Snow at Louveciennes,” Alfred Sisley 49
Beginning of Winter—A Sijo Sequence 50
Letter to My Double 51
Message for the Disheartened 52
After the murders I dream I am watching a riding lesson 54
The Wounded Clown, 1939 55
At Carmon’s Funeral Home 56
Plea to the Missing God 57
I cast a net over sullen waters 58
The Message 60
Dreamwork 61
Glosa 63
When I Meet You 65
Maintenance 66
Shadow at Evening 70

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 73
somehow, in some ways, it has managed to survive—pampas grass in the snow

—MATSUO BASHO
SHOULD THE FOX COME AGAIN TO MY CABIN IN THE SNOW

Then, the winter will have fallen all in white

and the hill will be rising to the north,

the night also rising and leaving,

dawn light just coming in, the fire out.

Down the hill running will come that flame

among the dancing skeletons of the ash trees.

I will leave the door open for him.
HUNGER

It is the gnawing within the silence
of the deep body which is like
the pool a waterfall replenishes
but can never fill.
The watery room of the body
and its voices who call and call
wanting something more, always more.

Once in a dream, the trees in a peach orchard
called out saying: Here, this bright fruit,
hold its roundness in your palm,
and I held one, wanting
the others I could not hold,
as the light fell through the trees,
one cascade after another.

Now, the wind from the hurricane
that veered out to sea,
and the hard rain blow through the space
where yesterday men felled the spruce,
its height and beauty, for no good reason.
Where it was, only emptiness remains,
and the stump level with the ground.

The wind finds its own place
and waits there holding its breath
for a moment, calling to no one,
surprising us by its stillness,
surprising even the rain which comes in
to my house through the untidy gardens
where it has been sending its life breath
over the dying mint and blood-red daylilies.
Summer is dying and I grow closer
to the shadow moving toward me
like the small spiders
that inhabit and hunt in the corners.
And the wind stirs, rattles the panels,
singing its own hunger, its own water song.
STILL, SILENCE MOVES ME TO SPEAK

of past, future, all those years
when life seemed ordinary
and was not. Mere wanderings

luminous memories
and the goat of chaos
always at cliff’s edge
with his yellow burning eyes.

The future burns on a short wire,
comes swiftly as lightning,
no dance can stop it.

The dead visit my house
again and again.
They roam the old rooms.
What I am given in sleep—

scent of raspberries and lime,
a wooden chair rocking,
the blacksmith who thrusts
iron into the fire.