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Winter Sticks

Edwin Honig

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His eyes' amazing clarity defies
 The misted window, finds the sole
 Pedestrian, a bundled blob, to envy
 At the farthest lamppost near the crossing.
 Blue frost blackens when the traffic
 Blots that last survivor out.
 Abandoned to his doubt, the street
 Retreats, distills the pulsing silence.
 The killer fades into his crime.

"Then it's all a lie!" she shouts.
 He thrashes free upon the elemental
 Ground and flings the bait straight back:
 "I've never denied it yet!" But is it
 His lie merely to find out? For when
 She tears her heavy grievance out
 And mounts the stairs to cry, surprised,
 He feels his bubbling neck, the head
 Detached and following the bait above.

Outside it hails true diamonds. Shadows
 Trickle down the page flattened
 On his lap. Unhooked, he floats
 Into his own decapitated calm.
 But whose mild unpunishable eyes
 Are nibbling at the open book?
 Unclenched, his humped up body will
 Soon rise to switch on, gloating in
 The dark, the flagrant reading light.

WINTER STICKS*

The curdling tree is quarreling with my sleep
 In winter tensing, bare, withholding snow.
 Be tall, be white, I cry, and slim as whips
 Your arms. What moves? The coat-tails of a crow.

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NMQ POETRY SELECTIONS

The iced moon puzzles through blue floes of cloud.
Rocks bloom aureoles, winsome, diamondy—
Hoops to pull them through or ring me round
Far from this milky dream-dispelling tree.

I wake wandering, pursued by breath,
My own, a spun glaze tricked behind that glows.
When I pause it is a ticking breeze
That waits ahead to mark off my repose.

My ragged bones stretch out to wear the snow!
The teeming blur returns: Not yet, scarecrow.

EDWIN HONIG

ON ACQUIRING A SENSE OF STYLE

(one) less noise please
(pipe down) spinning
word (lissenaminut cantchya)
hey down front (into
one) shutchergodammouth
(regular boilerfactory) dancing
phrase (shaddup willya)
QUIET (into
one) ssh what is it
(can you hear anything) singing
thought (can't quite make it out)
no wait (into
one) just turn up this dial a bit
(aahh there it's coming through) breathing
word

NORMAN FRIEDMAN