

## Glossary for Winter

Snow doesn't really fall. Most times it comes into this world sideways and aimless, as if going nowhere in particular. Some of these delicate elaborate miniature geometries the ignorant call flakes the wind is rough with. Others float close to each other and then embrace and come down more quickly together. Still other move along invisible pathways precisely, tracing each curve and spiral. At night the gathered sleeping bodies that make up the snow give starlight back to the glittering hide of the beast some call the night sky for convenience. Sometimes the birds known as starlings, the ones who whistle like comedians in sharkskin suits that seem to change color in August light depending on the angle of the head and neck (purple, green, an iridescent blue like the gemstone called something like appetite), the ones who won't go south though they aren't made for the cold, sometimes in the long hard shining nights as they hold on asleep in the trees one of them is killed by the cold and falls into the snow. The next night another one or two. No one gathers them up, so they stay where they fell inside the snow and the bodies are still there when the snow is gone and the spring has come on, slowly relaxing

and falling apart into fragments the wind  
throws around or hides in odd corners,  
or sometimes (these may be more recent) composed  
and still, as if resting asleep in a bed  
in a child's dollhouse, in a scene from some story  
I don't know the end of, perfectly calm  
(to the eye at least) and peaceful, as if  
the word dead (the one all the others are built on)  
was not quite right either.