

## Two Poems About the Work

### I

*We've heard it drum before-how many times?*

We've heard it drum before — how many times?  
That rain which pelts from shingled roof onto  
Now-resting window air conditioner's shell.  
It booms without a hint of help or harm  
To aging motor set within its walls.  
That's how it's been in here, perhaps you'd say,  
My own cold words like rain or melted snow  
Just drop neurotic tears on the tough shell  
Of your hallucinated world.  
If squirrels skitter on some tin-roofed shed  
Or audience applauds through tired routine,  
These come to mind, but no, they are not here.

"Be quiet, please." "Don't move." "Don't sit like that."  
"Just do what's right and do what's up to you."  
"Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you."  
"Could I have something else to drink right now?"  
"You sniveling weaseling no good little runt,"  
"You are no friend of mine. Remember that."  
"I want no conversation, argument, dispute."  
"Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you."

And so, and so, and so, and so, and so —  
Rain hammers, thuds and drums. The air grows cold.  
Snow clings to spruce tree branches once again.  
So if I am impatient and unkind  
And if contempt and spit are earned by me,

The enemy is neither me nor you  
Nor in me nor in you, nor outside me or you  
But all of the above are true.

Distrust, like ice and stone, a glacier grinding down  
The mountain of your non-eternal life —  
I cannot change this monstrous road of ice,  
And melt it with the sunlight of my love,  
But walking on it crash into crevass  
With broken bones and ghastly pain, alone,  
To marvel at blue crystal coffin walls.  
Some day, I muse, my body frozen stiff,  
I'll be discovered, pen and pad in hand  
Enshrined like prehistoric mastadon  
Whose meat was served in splendid banquet feast  
To once-intense, now-stilled Explorers Club.

### II

*You sit in mute withdrawal*

You sit in mute withdrawal  
Pressed up against that wall,  
My image of despair.

Your feet are drawn up tight.  
Face hidden from my sight,  
You fiddle with your hair.

I sit in worn-out chair,  
Pad ready, pen in air.  
Your thoughts, please, over there?

We both have frizzy hair, we two:  
I think "perhaps I'll marry you:"  
We come at life as if it were a dare.

I think about my chair, and me  
So rigid, tense and fidgety.  
You're right, you know, to wonder if I care.

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