Patricia Hampl

Mozart During A Snow Storm

Hands are clapping in Vienna,
the child Mozart takes his bow.
Ladies reach for the triangular
iced cakes of intermission;
the small chapped Viennese hand
touches my forehead.

Snow is falling, snow
is falling in the twentieth century.
All the brief white threads sift
through the air like silence breathing
its own thin life between
the quick notes of the sonata.

The dense, heavy stars of afternoon
stud the brain with slowness.
We slam in iceboats across
our bleak landscape. We are going
backward, we are going forward,
history is this slick surface.

So much whiteness in one lifetime.
The children are shrill in the snow,
they are making a man.
A shovel scrapes like a thought.
In the bedroom a sheet is taut
across the double bed. We are like
everyone who has ever lived.