

*Roberta Swann*

## Parallel Tracks

The house is all light, even in winter-dark.  
Snow becomes sun, luring us out. I bundle  
in the layers I used to swaddle the kids in.  
He throws on a jacket. "Where's your gloves, mow-ron?"  
I yell. "Don't need them." He pounds his chest.  
Moron, I think, imagining how I'll be the one  
wheeling *him* around in twenty years, because  
he's too macho to dress.

He stops at every twig. I'm dying to sprint.  
He scrutinizes animal droppings. He finds a skull  
that could have been a woodchuck's. Two sets of tracks  
cross our road and I think about a deer-couple  
having a day very much like ours. I break away  
and run up the hill. When I first saw the house  
without foliage it looked shocked, like a man  
furtively going bald. Winter took a while;  
its beauty more sober than summer, but tipsy  
in its way.

I race back to Brian, exhilarated. I saw two deer.  
He found more droppings. "Coprology for Kids",  
I invent another game, variety shit-kits we could market.  
He takes my hand to shut my mouth. Walks with him  
are slow but full-service. I learn what I would not  
discover on my own.

Inside, we're surprised two hours have passed.  
Time goes. But here, in this place, it adds up  
to something.