

Prayer at Thirty Below

Pink dawn, pink icing of snow
on the frozen lake. Even You must be cold —

the sun a pale brooch pinned to Your coat.
The trees pop their knuckles.

The baseboard heaters clatter and groan.
Smarter than we are, the ducks are long gone —

even the idiot swans left in December,
five white shirts flapping south.

Now a stiff ribbon of smoke unspools
from the powerplant. I'm lumped

on the sofa — sore throat, the tv's holler
and flash. I want to go where the swans go.

I want a blood warm sea — terra cotta mossed
on the rooftops, backwards tumble of stars.

The curtains' deep breath. The neighbor's
crackly record again — (*Guantanamera*,

sad little rosary stuck in my head). I want
what everyone wants — sun on my neck

all afternoon like a fever, then sleep —
warm snow we lie down in . . .