

White Memory Number One

It's as if he spied the snowy world
with a winged coat always over his head.

A woman keeps coming to the lit window & looking out.
He's as sure as I am that the brightness within
precludes any positive archival memory.

What if I say the man is approaching a gravestone
at a quarter after midnight, the lilies an armful of phosphorescence
making an embarrassed bouquet of all the private moments
that I am ruining just as I am overseeing their collapse within?

He's remembering the white hood she wore once
when they went sledding. The wind invented white doves.

The wind invents my deadly participation in his arousal,
the old-fashioned way it makes him drop her off without a kiss

and walk as far as the river where he notices white eyes blown open
on the surface of the water, ice floes beneath his posture of surrender,
nothing drastic, more like single blown snowbells in a window.

I'm as sure as I am forty-eight years old on Tuesday
that he shivers with stagefright standing before us descended from
him,
a shiver full of the idealist fancies he doesn't want the rap for,
that he knows we'll live our lives by

If he could hear us talking in the back of the restaurant
he'd consider himself an immortal shabby yet sufficient,
his life already lore disguising our voices with heavy drink.

Would he fear the man of whom we speak?