

At Sea

All night long — and this for a month
or more — wind has pummeled
and clawed the old house (where now
I live alone), whining in the rigging
of the eaves, shrieking at the panes,
demanding to be let in from the outside

where thick flakes are driven
over the earth. Before dark I saw
them swirl in the fields, drift up
beside the dormers and clot in the branches
of my apple trees. Later, lying
in bed, I imagine myself afloat
in a heavy sea (as years ago on the Pacific),
the timbers of the house creaking
about me, joists groaning under the flail
of wind, in the sickening wash of swells.

And in the morning, when I venture out,
bound for work, I turn back to see
the house in the dawn's clear calm,
see the roof lopsided with heaped snow
making it seem as if the whole structure
is foundering beneath a leaden sky,
its windows blind against the pale
new-risen sun, white trees humped
like arctic floes around it, as it drifts towards me,
a ghost ship on a wide and silent ocean.