

ROBERT BENSE

*Christmas Morning Walk**Hodie Christus Natus Est*

Fifteen above this frescoed morning.
A gust sharp as disgust
sucks the front door shut.
Kinship, the groaning board
always at someone else's table
out of reach.
I turn to sun's sienna,
share a high clarity
for two miles
with the faceless sky.
I step fast. Past the crematorium.
Through the cemetery. The gated
city. Looking for the uncreated
light that changes the mortal sift
of dust. And everything else
that matters.
Snow frolic swirls, glitters
the trail.
This watch and scour
pointless as foil stars,
the tinsel ice
I've walked out on.
Even if they knew how —
the ministering angel,
the women who will weep for me —
Thérèse of Lisieux, coughing blood,
and the Indian girl at Nogales,
giving herself, her poverty —

they cannot find me here hiding
my face. My carnal disguise
the wasted world.
I share the path. Someone's empty
Four Roses. Summer's condom.
Shadows already at my left hand.
Overtaking, leaning into the wind.
The line lengthening. Fingers of ice
ash in our eyes.