

BETH GOOBIE

BACKYARD SNOW

The day cradled inside a paperweight,
Dickensian with falling snow; thoughts without words
afloat across the brain, blotting out discontent,
returning the gift of beginnings to a tired mind.
In alleys and along fences, beauty mounds itself,
myriad crystalline patterns blending into diaphanous
wholeness, the soul scooped into mittens
and examined for tiny white cries

of ecstasy. As a child, I thought the sky was God,
its great grey forehead clouded with portent,
each snowflake a blessing sent with particular intent
down upon the world. Standing within that great descent,
my face a prayer lifted toward tenderness,
I felt myself outlined in purpose the way snow
embraces a landscape—touch ubiquitous yet gentle,
knowing vast as horizon,
a cosmic overhead arc magnifying the dome of the brain

while earthbound, to either side, red brick houses, hydro wires,
the mute ache of December maple
accepted this hushed fall of white, this divine exquisite
that unpleats the weariness of the heart
and prepares it for the coming of the first child,
wrapped firmly in scarf and red-cheeked grin
as she flings open the back door onto the glory of purified existence—

shrieks, snowballs, that stand at the centre of the universe,
arms outstretched as the fall backward begins

and wings spread ground level to sketch angels
riding unimpeded from the great good earth—

one small blessing sent upward, its pattern
unique and love-delicate as all that is given down.