

Lovestory

It was as ponderous on the snowbank
with my still-not-twenty-year-old mind & friends
who were so quick to find girlfriends—
girlfriends! to have: such a covetable state, I had so many
ideas about why it would be right, what shape
it would take, how thorough a lover I'd be,
it was as ponderous there as here,
here at the counter in between shifts,
where I am so solemnly underwater,
my moods crafted by brick, wallpaper,
elbow-bend sidewalk, stiff-backed lamppost,
tumbling car tire, all of it, I am a crafted
man, curious & curious about the boy
on the snowbank, as winter-minded & jealous
as any such specimen could be.

I am perfectly, sensibly sure that he suffered more than I,
that he was completely unaware of being looked upon,
questioned, analyzed, that he was more certain
that when he looked to the stars, it was him
throwing out some great net, a big thought,
the widest thing, thrown out from him, *out*,
I am convinced that he, on the snowbank,
had no clue that the gaze was returned,
much less by himself, styled & steady
by some Tennessee town street. Tennessee
would have sounded more like an emblem on a coin
than an actual place for an actual twenty-
two-year-old man to live. 'Man' itself would have sounded
inaccurate—still does, somewhat. Yes: he suffered
more, no question about it. Always casting out,
never sure of having actually received something
—a thought, a blessing, some look of interest—
he was condemned to much more boundless a vacuum.
He was capable of some warmth,
capable of some real, heavy meaning,
but only by default, only by being
a late-stage kid who cared so much
about achieving love. Born into a real body,
in this become-real moment of the American timeline,
with the love discourse so rhapsodically popularized
by the most & least rigorous thinkers in the land,
he had an absolute lack of choice
when it came to parsing the moods inspired in him
by his other friends telling tales of cunnilingus
successful & embarrassing, each story
a thousand thousand more than he,
himself, reclining on the snowbank,

could tell about himself.
When I see him, he's pitiable for being so unpitiable.
You would not have fought for him,
he would have taken offense if you had.
But, seen thus, he has this advantage:
he's absolutely sure what love is.
He knows about its eternity, he knows about its unconditioned
arising, he knows about its inexhaustibility,
its perplexity, sure, & its visual state, which,
though truly inarticulate, is perfect,
what 'perfect' ought to mean.
His advantage is his sureness about love;
his disadvantage is never having had it.

Now I can speak about myself. I know
what did & didn't happen when I fell in love.
I know it was brisk, a trip for two together,
a trip for two to the exclusion of many others,
I know the semblance of gallantry & the absence of form,
I know the earnestness of execution & the willfulness
of all-else exclusion, I know why the two caged lovebirds
only mumble. I know what I was looking for.
I knew then what I was looking for. On the snowbank
I lie down, stay that way, eventually
she drifts into my midst. She was lying
on her own snowbank for a time, she had a face
pressed up into the winter mist, eyes open,
& it was I who did the drifting toward her.
We were both drifting. Neither of us moved,
but each body was in motion, somehow
each mind was primed to accept the other.
When first we drifted together it was as snowflake
to neighbor snowflake, it was moisture
meets moisture & drips, a crystalline thing
together, unwilling by anything but wind,
yet two undrifting drifters, supine upon snowbanks,
found their bodies met & their minds engaged.
I was the dreamer of platonic absolutes
while she whittled away the snow from the limb
reserving her interest for bark, then bone, then life-force itself.
For the passenger in the know, it goes without saying
that when two snowflakes drift together, their moisture
gets heavy, & they fall back into grass & are sunned
back into listless cloud. So it went—the story extends,
but I don't have any doubt about where & why.
However: 'love', *LOVE*, having been demystified, became mysterious.
I picked up a few good cunnilingus stories,
even gave her flowers & chocolate on Valentine's Day.
That was a trip for me. I loved her well, then loved her poorly,

then not at all. Why? Wherefore? The diesel drum plummets.
The coal-churn, the ponderous post-lover.
From unloved surety came full-loved question:
Where love? Once again? What about her?
Do I drift? Am I guided? Do I guide me?
Wherefore may be discerned the patterns of gale,
that a flake such as I might collide
with some other supine drifter?

After me, the energy of many days' vigor
will have solidified, as either a hill
or a valley, & snow will fall there. They will always
be drifting together, snowflakes, & they should always
have minds to illuminate their entanglement
with fate, the lack of willed direction
& the luck of falling at the proper moment to consider love
whatever. I lie on the grass, I feel my face with my fingers.
It is pleasant. It is green, it is wonderful.
I have enough money to waste ink & make feces.
Some days I fake luck, some days I, full lucky,
am filled with gratitude, watch my younger soulful watcher,
my soulful needer of cunnilingus stories, my soul
unfolding furrows on my soul, on its sureties, predispositions
& objects of engagement. I love when she

shows up in my dreams, for she never looks the same,
she is always saying something that pertains
to somebody else. She sees me accidentally.
It was always that way. It is always an accident
that begs depiction, that begs
to be stilled only once more.