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Poems I Found on My Way to Work: November 15--First Snowfall

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Poems I Found on My Way to Work

David Schelhaas

November 15—First Snowfall

Since dawn the snow has fallen,
the tiny flakes nestling in the still green grass,
softening the bare branches of the ash trees,
glazing the firmament in a white haze,
making everything more beautiful and less clear.

God, that ancient rhetorician, is speaking
the soft language of snow, persuading us
into winter.

December 2—Dawn, After Six Inches of Snow

All the tall fir trees and all the dainty pines,
dressed to the nines
in white tuxedos and white dancing gowns
after a night on the town,
have come back to the lawns
just before dawn.

There they stand, dainty and tall,
dreaming chaste dreams of the first winter ball.
Soothed by cool white woolen sheets,
slowly they nod as they drift off to sleep.

January 20—Clear and Bright

The Wolfswinkel's willow in winter
has veiled her face in sheer gold
as she stands all alone in the garden,
sovereign, mysterious, old.

A stranger, I come to the garden to see
Wolfswinkel's willow aglow
and marvel how something in January
can blossom surrounded by snow.

All the trees in the neighbors' backyards,
the maples and lindens and larches,
stand naked and cold, unable to move,
but the willow is dancing. She arches

her back toward the sun and inhales
the light that the source of light's sent her,
then with alchemy old turns her branches to gold,
the Wolfswinkel's willow in winter.

February 9—Ash Wednesday

This morning, while Christians
all around this blue-green globe received
a fingerprint of ash upon their brows,
you, with your sense of irony,
reached down to touch the dead
land where I sometimes struggle to believe
and left a fingerprint of frost and a dusting of snow.
Grimy streets, old piles of leaves,
corn-stalked fields,
even the hands of the naked trees
were in the night made white, no,
whiter, than snow.