

## An Idea of Winter

*A correspondence for Deborah*

One who moves around  
One who is displaced  
One who leaves one country for another  
One who leaves but is unhappy about being left behind  
One who is forced to abandon the past and so clings to it  
Located in history but not in time  
One who is displaced from a home and forced to reconcile with  
the fact that the world has changed  
One who must live in two homes simultaneously  
One who belongs to an old regime, now driven from power  
One who is embarrassed, sought out, hunted down  
One who is forced to find a new house and begin the process of  
forgetting  
One who remembers by holding on to a pre-past, meaning, the  
past before trauma  
Never quite embodying the present  
World wary  
Here but not here  
In a country where children grow up to displace others  
Very much aware of being "in between"  
The gap between real and constructed reality  
Mirrors  
Say that again?  
Builds  
It's not clear  
Creates  
Okay  
Displaced  
    person between multiple worlds  
        real or constructed  
            who knows  
                anything?

✱

Who am I writing about?  
Which abstract who?  
I need to place myself in this writing  
Do I inhabit the pre-past, the past before trauma, as a means of  
reconnecting the parts of me that are wrong and need to be  
fixed  
(No, not that)  
I don't cling to photographs and don't try to create past in my  
present  
(Except)  
I am aware of being in-between  
I do not, as a matter of respect, look at winter from the  
perspective of winter  
I figure that would be too presumptuous  
I look at winter from the perspective of a mind I am  
comfortable occupying:  
memory of snowy mountain  
Here the poetic line moves into essay, but notice the effect:  
What, after all, is being said?

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This is all an allusion to Wallace Stevens's poem, "The Snow  
Man"  
I'm using "The Snow Man" as many writers before me have  
used it: to bridge  
"The Snow Man" is an essay — it moves a thesis into a  
complete thought  
But that thought just happens to be poetry  
The snow man is a listener who is "searching for fresh concepts  
not yet encompassed by the general pattern"  
(So said Adorno. Because an essay should include at least one  
quote.)  
By inhabiting the logic (the mind) of winter, the listener is able  
to think outside systems of hierarchal thought  
Free to experience multiple logics and not be confused

Not bound by preconceived notions of how to look at winter,  
he is able to become winter by assuming the mind of winter  
(So, is this language necessary? Is the lyric essay just a way to  
write weightfully using poetic vagaries?)

But wait, this is important:

The listener's past is opaque the moment he is able to "behold"  
the present moment: the snow moment

And then speaks (thinks) outside of hierarchy

And then casts aside any idea of "refuge" or homeland

And then places himself (or, is placed, forcibly) outside  
bartering systems

Homeless

(As a state of mind. Who wants to experience this? Readers of  
lyric essays, most likely.)

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I who am writing

(Who?)

I haven't seen snow in a very long time means:

what happened to the winter of my childhood?

(The lyric essay can be memoir told through thought, not story

Language is personal.)

I'm holding on for the future:

hydrogen. fluorescent. optics.

People move through many winters — I'll never know

Wary, in the gap, in-between

(here comes the final sentence)

the winters that were are no longer coming

(or: thesis with no closure,

design with space,

resolution through poetic form)