

## *Three Poems from From A Winter Notebook*

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It sounded so much better before I wrote it down,  
even my jealousy seemed wingéd, like Marina's.  
*Does the road wind up hill all the way?* My teeth will rot,  
but I'll be rot, I hope, before that happens — then will words  
mean what they say, finally..., then will you stop asking?  
Like strawberries, late kisses make my lips itch. Lately,  
All I see in whom I love, is aging, their eyes dig  
deeper — dead birds underfoot. Will there be only one  
rhythm in hell? One sound? Must I walk *to the very  
end?* Cell towers have replaced the guard posts. Serpentine  
parkways coil upward middle paths to mediocre  
death. Science finds cigarettes addictive, I feel the same  
about tomatoes. Actually it's people, our ken  
for adaptation. "It was my job," they say, "I did  
what I was told." *Yes, sir. No, sir.* Let's have ourselves one last  
good laugh at ourselves and drop the curtain. That's what I miss  
most with you, that laughing, after you had found me frozen  
at the bus stop, pulled me back, though you didn't want me,  
running barefoot, naked, over winter avenues.

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Winter, I do not ache for you.  
Whatever this attachment looks like  
it's not aching for looking new—no  
matched pillowcases, nothing's perfect.  
So little makes me ache as does  
the way you stand up out of bed,  
irritably push the window  
open, inhale hard smoke, cast back  
one glance of cold—so many lashes.

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Next day the world begins again, full sun  
in the room can't read the scribbling of late  
last night once all had left and sleep swept down  
sudden, nor brush nor water on the face.  
Electric toothbrush could have saved you once —  
now it's too late, as one who would have loved  
you had you brighter teeth is on a bright  
journey, in stronger arms than your arms could  
have strength, etcetera. There are so many  
twists — as creases in the sheets, pocks in brick —  
in fate. Eyes weary, obliged to write, you  
have misunderstood me, all who once joyed at this  
touch. How sweet — last cigarette at gallows,  
at the wall; born to die how many times,  
the twenty-fifth day of the month December  
in droll satire's laughter, in a game  
of truths and lies (what need distinguish them  
in the biography — as many I's  
as sleep through mornings, not enough, come typing,  
come what may). The puce of prisms, windows  
at certain slant of light, some things egged on  
by electricity to hum. My shadow  
on the floor to check the sentimental tear,  
next to a peel of garlic on the rutted  
parquet, next to grays, and lists, lists endlessly  
repeating in endlessly retreating worlds.  
Guests and ghosts of guests reach hands for coffee,  
forget their scarves to pick up later on,  
as I search for the honorary plaque,  
for tombs to what will be forgotten, yet  
remains where lies last winter's fallen snow.

