

Katie Hartsock

On the Heat of Upstate Travel in the Advancing Polar Air

Winterreise Winterreise

he was saying as I woke him
first a blanket then a ride
a winter journey
he'd been dreaming in *vinter*

vinter vinter

Driver take the Amstutz
to the shores of the Dead River
we have packed our sandwiches

of tavern ham and fig jam
winter wants him and I am
vintering
tavern ham fig jam
aged and crumbling cheese
on old world rye to be had
on a headland of sand
the sign says
could wash out any minute

what grain what grape what vintage
are we drinking
this is one of those days we disappear for years

the Orthodox
don't like all the torment of Western churches
our demons' gleeful torturing
in Renaissance splay across canvas and domes
the dimpled asses of *putti* smiling on
concerned but unable to help
and fairly certain none of that will happen
to them



No the long beards and veils of the East believe
God's love is fire
and the virtuous experience it as bliss
and all others as a burning
a cleansing a purgation
that gets rid
of anything but bliss
for anyone

drinking a winter journey
he's still dreaming
of ways to worship despite himself to get beside that fire

I've never had Swiss like this
old world old
dry hard world
all these ingredients
what a pleasure to chew
on the beautiful shores
at the Dead River's mouth
bit by bit a cold sandwich hits
our hot stomachs

until we're filled we need we await disasters
like this weather
don't call it a polar vortex
meteorologists say
it's just winter
vinter vinter



Katie Hartsock

Driver take the Amstutz
past the factory on the lake
its bricks are singing
some red rye blues
some mortar ballads of hard-pressed fruit
a song of vines and times so cold it killed bricks
against the blanket waters
against a ride of aged blue

factory on the lake
dark intestines
flame within
I have felt the bliss
and the burning too

