1991

Winter Geese [Poem]

Jonas Zdanys
Sacred Heart University, zdanysj@sacredheart.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/eng_fac
Part of the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/eng_fac/17

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English Department at DigitalCommons@SHU. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@SHU. For more information, please contact ferribyp@sacredheart.edu.
WINTER GEESE (Poem)

To the memory of Thomas G. Bergin

The changes of evening  
come steadfast as birds  
scraping the lake  
in the darkness downwind.  
A dim chill of light  
tilts from the curve of water,  
traces a black wave  
of geese that lifts past  
branches beyond our reach.  
Winter comes this way  
each year with the birds,  
settling across the trees  
and hard grass of the late  
November hills as the season  
turns toward the year's  
darkness and softens  
the sky to the colors  
of weathered wood swollen  
with the textures of wind.  
Behind the dark windows  
of this house,  
tuned to the slide  
of weather and not sure  
of what it is we wait for  
in all these long nights  
of wind that whistles  
through the cracks  
of the chimney and repeats  
the names of things  
that we once were  
softly, like some secret  
hidden from itself,  
I watched as night rippled  
toward land in slow circles,  
unravelling across the dark  
fields to strings of cold rain,  
and cried myself to sleep,  
remembering in this music  
of weather and wind  
the empty places and  
the dead silence of things  
that pass like the circles  
made by rain on still water  
to the edges of shadows and dreams.  
Now, as a thin layer  
of frost coats rocks  
stung with cold and stains  
the roof and walls stitched  
with the faint spume  
of first light, I listen
in this ebb of time
between sleep and waking
to the whispers
of bitterness and sweet grief
in the folds of the wind,
shaking off again
the deep solitude of night
and the wearying press
of the painful emptiness
of this changing season
that even my remorse
at death could never fill.
Outside, incandescent as ice
in the first blue touch
of sunlight, the wild birds
trill the clear water
to a muffled familiar sound.
One rises effortlessly
on white wings through
the misting lake grass
and hangs like slow smoke
on the horizon, circling home
to the white hills
in this half-light
like an unexpected sign
of hope plain against
the promised clearing
of this winter's dawn.

~~~~~~~

By Jonas Zdanys