

Psalm of the Dead

They are the herd striding off the path
into the still-standing oaks,
moving as one across the creek-ice.

They leave us waiting on the open trail,
hearing the tap of their steps,
their loss of heft, their lack of obligation.

When they have gone,
hold the thaw from the ice.
Let the frogs stay frozen under leaves.

Keep the oaks bare where they stand,
if they have to stand.
If we have to stand.