

Solstice

Poor winter, you precede a dream.
The austere architecture of your dish
of tears disdains to pilot her perfectly
adequate silence through the hastily
rearranged stars. Experiment, instead,
with your repertoire of hesitations, or,
if I have not misread you all these years,
yours is another case of mistaken identity,
and on December's shallow stage you're
the breathless girl we love all the more for
her brave cadet's costume of flared frock
coat and blue breeches embellished at
elbows and knees with grave rosettes. She
is husband, as it were, to the serenades
that bring a pink fever to the tips of her
unkissed fingers; distraction of princes,
she will shed many sighs before she decides
whom she will die for. Now you wandering
scholars of lost causes, pitch your pilgrimage
toward the west's pavilion of fathomless
dark fingerprints and borrow your songs from
the fainting swan's final *fa la la*, from the brown
wren's dim and stubborn *Go no farther*.