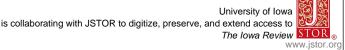
## Maintaining the Indistinguishable · Pattiann Rogers

Sonia and Cecil are surprised to learn That the large, snow-covered objects dotting The beach across the lake are not stones Or pieces of broken ice washed ashore, But whooper swans, waiting through the storm, drawn-in And pressed close to the earth, their heads out-of-sight Beneath their wings, their bodies gradually Becoming indistinguishable from the snow-drifts Building on the beach.

Gordon, sitting by the fire inside, likes to imagine The white snow slowly covering the white swans, snow so light Its only recognizable touch is cold, and the invisible Black spaces caught inside the crystals Of each white flake. And he likes to imagine the thick White feathers beneath the snow, feathers so soft A blind man might miss their touch, and the dark Spaces caught deep inside the down of each soft barb. And beneath the feathers, he likes to imagine the swans So real their most definite touch is the shudder Of light caught inside their black eyes, light Almost indistinguishable from the blind crystals caught Against the window looking out on the white cavity of the storm.

Felicia is excited by this discovery And has convinced Albert to join her in fashioning Swans of snow all along the lakefront before the house. Afterwards they will curl up on the shore, Put their faces under their arms and wait in the falling snow Until Sonia tells them they are indistinguishable From the snow-swans they have created on the beach, Which are indistinguishable from the swan-like drifts Spanning the snowy shore, which are indistinguishable From the whooper swans waiting across the dark lake, Sleeping inside the falling black spaces caught Inside the touch of white caught inside their eyes.

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Felicia and Albert, curled inside the black cavity Of sleep inside the swans they have invented inside themselves Are also able to maintain such spaces.

Gordon is certain that all swan-like figures Are completely indistinguishable from the white shudder Of words caught in the act of creating Their most peculiar distinctions.