

*winter*

It is winter  
death deep before spring  
the orchards barren  
with a chill  
as when He died on the cross  
still not yet risen  
stone heavy on the heart  
not yet rolled back  
to this crucifix above the altar  
we bend our knees  
that Christ may be born anew in our family

It is winter  
and the statue of Mary and Child who holds the universe  
stands to the right of this altar to her crucified Son

It is winter  
and the braceros wait for spring  
and the war wounded vet begs, legless, waiting for a meal  
and the garbage picker looks with hope and waits for luck  
and the gypsies make willow-wood furniture from near the river and  
offer its sale  
and in the distance burned skulls litter Japan and Europe  
the second War is ending  
and the air near the tannery snells of curing hides and the rendering  
of hoofs

It is winter  
and this is our home

It is winter  
and father and i go to early Mass  
still in the dark  
It is winter