

Winter's Presence 2010

by pam rosenblatt

Wind cuts through black spandex gloves,
Fingers numb, skin tight and sore.

A short triangular plastic shovels into the
White plastic container filled with topaz crystal-like

Salt granulars. Scratchy sandy sounds echo.
I take the shovel out, jiggle my hand.
Specks of aqua blue sprinkle
On the tan asphalt covered with white snow and frozen

Slabs of ice. My cheeks burn, my neck cold as if
A package of frozen peas had been placed
On it to freeze pain from a strained neck. Shovel,
Shovel, shovel spurts burst the air. My ears covered

By a lambskin hat cry for the scratch, scratch,
Scratch to stop. But noises build
And the snow mounds grow like dirt
From a new grave in progress.

The ice melt spreads, leaves a flow down
The winterized driveway. Its base a swimming pool filled
With black water, deep ice, and an old coffee cup.
A motorized sputtering, whooshing colors the street's cotton

Puffed banks with yellow-brown sand.
I stand near the driveway's bottom
Wipe my teary eyes, and tilt my head upwards.
Flakes fall on my cold face. A strip of snow slides

Off the house's roof and spatters on the
Driveway, instantly melting.
Wind pierces my dungarees. My arms
Bear shivers from Winter's Presence,

A whirring, cluttering, sputtering scene.
I toss ice melt on the sidewalk, and walkway,
Snap on the quarter full container's cap,
And climb the stairs to the front door.

The front door drips ice from its metal rim.
I enter the apartment, close the door,
Put the ice melt away, not sensing the inside warmth.
Slowing cold evaporates from my skin

Then, Winter's Presence dissolves into a tropical arena
Filled with plants, heat, and parakeets' chirping.
I look out the glistening window, see a plow
Spraying dirty snow against a high bank.

What a relief! I'm inside. No more snow clearing —
Until the white blessing speaks again.
Then, the routine plays over again,
Like Shih Tzu Spottie in a maze.

