

Crocus in the Snow

Coming to life  
is so tentative,  
so dangerous.  
The first, tender buds  
are so vulnerable,  
the cold so killing.

Rising up purple and gold  
from sterile, white snow,  
crocus seem so fully alive.  
They are first fruits,  
the first quickening,  
harbingers of a fecund world

They cannot see  
around the corner  
beyond snow to summer.  
They cannot know  
that harvest comes finally  
to flesh and flower.

But I see that life now  
is fragile, transitory  
and terribly sweet.  
I know that now  
is a filament of forever,  
a crocus in the snow.

Blue Tailed Lizards

Skittering its own way  
across a sunny wall,  
a steely gray lizard  
with a brilliant blue tail.  
I am arrested, stunned  
by its ludicrousness,  
gratuitous color,  
pointless decoration.

In fact, the world is full of it:  
tulips, roses, rainbow iris –  
plants producing no useful fruit;  
the splendid ruby throat of an  
otherwise dull green hummingbird;  
or the trees whose autumnal leaves  
instead of simply falling off,  
blaze away: crimson, gold, orange.

We could survive without  
all this wasted pigment.  
Why do I forget this  
in the cold, faded light  
of gray February?  
Those pallid days I need,  
gratuitous color,  
pointless blue tailed lizards.

## I Had Forgotten

Driving to church  
that Sunday morning  
we were enfolded  
in pristine whiteness.  
The crunch of new snow  
broke the crisp silence  
of the silver blue air.

Then I saw it.  
On a frozen stream  
beneath a covered bridge  
on that remote road  
in wintery western Pennsylvania  
lay a bloody lump,  
the head of a deer.

There was no carcass,  
just the obscenely severed head  
with a look of puzzlement  
in its limpid, brown eye.  
Virginal whiteness marred crimson;  
Sunday spun out of control.  
The peaceable kingdom isn't.

The lion still stalks the lamb.  
The cherubim`s flaming sword  
still blocks the way to Eden.  
Set between Adam's offspring  
and the beasts of the field,  
enmity still reigns  
from its terrible throne.

For a moment,  
I had forgotten.