

# LOVELL, MAINE

Sylvia Mercedes Beato

1.

The earth is hushed

deep under plowed snow.

Each bank a wall

dividing one story

from another.

At night it pulls at the stars

fishlined to our eyes,

illuminating.

On this day that is shorter

than tomorrow,

breath is visible

laughter is smoke

filling distant suns

in a cold February sky.

2.

& not just us. Not just

nocturnal confessions between friends

on love & other emergencies,

the beings we were, once or another,  
& then outwore.

Such are complicated things  
we say or they happen for reasons  
we say but really they are about  
letting go & that is tricky.

Slow hours run in place  
like a frozen river, keeping  
with the calendar.

Then it's seven in the morning  
& who can sleep at day  
break bright?

Not the birds  
scraping the sky,  
nor the icicles  
melting *lop drip lop* from the roof

To think: what will happen in two hours, in twenty minutes?

& I do hate to yearn for the future,  
to set sights wanting on something other than.

If we call this a journey & try to touch it  
with hands, fingers unfolding the edges,  
the names re-appear, merge, fade away.

Our affliction to stay present  
is a heartbeat racing lean and loud.  
& when we turn to the open window –

3.

Always a road,  
snow-banked. Significant.

Always a narrative  
that bends to meaning.

The drive is long.

I should be home            by ten.

*Please    keep still for me.*

Sylvia Mercedes Beato lives in Brooklyn where she teaches high school and laughs with her dog. Her work has been published in *Split This Rock*, *CALYX Journal*, *Bridge Eight*, and elsewhere. She is a recipient of the Hoyt Jacobs Memorial Poetry Award and a candidate for an M.F.A. in Poetry & Translation at Queens College CUNY.