

New Poetry by Lisa Stice



Caspar David Friedrich, "The Sea of Ice," (1823-24).

Headstrong

I'm sorry catches in the throat
and bruises in that wavering
hesitation like a rock falling
back to earth. See how it curves
under the skin, twists and cuts

as it hugs the voice box.

I forgive sways like a tamarack–
hackmatack, red larch, juniper,
larix laricina—of the low-lands
with roots in cool mud and branches
in the soft air where we hold
the belief we are stronger than wind.

The end is as blue as slag and twice
as worthless. This is where I say
I never meant it, and this is where
you say it doesn't matter anymore
because words are less than
clouds and leaves and stone.



Nicolai Fechin, Portrait of Varya Adoratskaya (1914)

Daughter

we are raising fire
a shock-headed girl
in this cold season

when you start a fire
be to windward, wait
for it to break out within

mind now what I say
remain quiet
for when fire breaks

we call these special days
nothing to me is sweeter
than a crackling flame

** some words borrowed from Struwwelpeter translated by Heinrich Hoffman ("any thing to me is sweeter," "shock-headed peter," "they crackle so, and spit, and flame," "mind now, Conrad, what I say") "The Attack by Fire;" The Art of War by Sun Tzu ("material for raising fire," "special days," "days of rising wind," "when fire breaks," "remain quiet," "wait for it to break out within," "when you start a fire, be to windward")*



Jacob Hoefnagel, "Orpheus Charming the Animals"

Homes Will Be Stripped Bare

this is one world

and this is another

the borders merely

traced out on the ground

with a small stick

in one world, animals:

zebras, giraffes,
lions, horses,
and dinosaurs

bide their time
stand together
quietly encamped

kept in readiness
for a decision
made in a single day

to overthrow their kingdom
cause commotion at home
the animals know

there is no time to ponder
just march to the place
beyond ordinary rules

* some words borrowed from "Weak Points and Strong" ("the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground," "quietly encamped"), "The Attack by Fire" ("bide your time," "kept in readiness"), "The Use of Spies" ("there will be commotion at home"), "Attacks by Stratagem" ("overthrows their kingdom"), "Maneuvering" ("ponder before you make a move"), "Laying Plans" ("beyond the ordinary rules"), and "Waging War" (the homes of the people will be stripped bare") *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu



Fairy Tales from Hans Christian Andersen (1914), Doubleday

The Book Closes

words become a strange
dream an explosion
the releasing of the trigger
another shovelful of earth
to plant secrets a storm
breaking with the momentum
of a round stone and yet
no real disorder at all
just the melodies that can never
be heard the colors
that can never be seen
just like the little birds
that fly far away further
than we will ever know

** some words borrowed from "The Traveling Companion" by Hans Christian Anderson trans. Erik Christian Haugaard ("he dreamed a strange dream," "another shovelful of earth," "the words became a picture," "the little birds flew far into the world," "the storm broke") and from "Energy" The Art of War by Sun Tzu ("give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard," "more hues than can ever be seen," "releasing of the trigger,"*

“and yet no real disorder at all,” “the momentum of a round stone”)