

## *Refugees in Massachusetts*

Everyone had to leave in a bloody hurry.  
No one had to come here. Those that did—  
the ones who should be sorry were not sorry.  
The ones who shouldn't be

run restaurants or laundromats or serve you  
shyly in the mall. Exquisite hands  
show you your change. Or chattily they drive you  
when you're too tired to say,

and all the diddy icons on the dashboard  
tremble. It's your town and not your town  
when you leave tips for them. What's barely whispered  
where they meet is true:

they might encounter him from the old world,  
who came at night, who giggled at their papers...  
Might see him smoking by the baseball field,  
padding towards the diner,

lip-reading in the library. He too  
escaped here, he too sobbed or stared ahead,  
made landfall; he eats pretzels in the queue.  
They are aware he's there

both when he is and isn't there. No crimes  
will stick in this new life. There is no court  
in session for the narratives and claims  
their voices split to make,

no angles to examine. There are times  
they jump and times they clasp. There is a wood  
they come to in a downpour, or have dreams  
they come to in a downpour.

## *Colorado Morning*

Looping around the more or less dead straight  
lines where skiers were,

some shy, nocturnal creature's one and only  
shot at its signature.

## *The Year in Pictures*

For the Year-in-Pictures feature,  
that annual old favourite,  
the man behind the night desk

was dealing with five thousand  
possibles at high speed,  
a speed at which his blond head

was shaking and his fingers  
propelling off so many  
the air was never empty

of the white-backed and numbered  
snapshots, as they fluttered  
earthward in succession.

## *The Strictures of What Was*

Nothing that's been does anything but dance.  
 Nothing that blinked does anything but stare,  
 now being over, though the merest sense  
     of *over* is strange there.

They move about. The strictures of what was  
 are written, not enforced, so it's a faith  
 we could grow used to. Eyes meet other eyes,  
     breath holds for breath, or breathes

to depths there never were, in bigger rooms  
 for longer drives by bluer seas. What happens  
 has been expected and improved in dreams,  
     it makes its home in seconds;

Plot is what's recalled, though there was none,  
 and Theme, though that's one colour of the seven  
 lording it a while. Nothing's to come  
     in that place—the word *heaven*

we used for something else, but the word *gone*  
 has what it meant in spades: an open space  
 the many made in us and only one  
     from there could ever close.