

Lori Lamothe

Reading

*at the Peabody-Essex Museum*

On the other side of glass  
a band plays marching songs  
and the leaves  
flicker green fire.  
The poet tries to ignore what everybody else  
isn't—tries to fasten our attention to the words;  
drapes cadence  
over the chandelier,  
the podium, the folding chairs.  
But it's spring and the world shines like a new puzzle—  
each window pane a promise  
that this is the year  
we're going to solve everything.

To the Guy Who Posted about Kittens  
On His Doorstep

*Take care of the kittens jerk ass.*

—*Craigslist reader*

You can forget about the girl.  
Nobody admits to adding more tape  
to a box of cuteness  
and expects karma to issue a pardon.

You're on your own now. Better  
to make use of your box cutter  
and watch them scatter  
across Darwin's concrete.

Why not? At first the lightness  
of the box will astound you,  
and for once the silence won't  
remind you you're single.

But it's never that easy, setting  
mistakes free. At night, in dreams,  
they always find their way back—  
tails flickering orange fire,

little eyes aglow, little sandpaper  
tongues licking at guilt  
like candles that won't blow out  
or riddles you can't solve.

## The Explorer's Dream

*In 1820, Arctic explorer William Scoresby arranged these shapes into a formal classification scheme, which included, in addition to the six-pointed stars, such forms as needle-like hexagonal prismatic columns . . .*

*--Philip Ball*

After so much winter  
it was impossible not to think of snow  
as a blank page—  
the mind numb to everything endless,  
the world an unwritten letter,  
a silence unbroken.  
My wife at home before fires burning,  
our sons vanquishing imaginary.  
What was there to say?  
This eternity a monster without name.

After enough time anybody  
can fall into a tunnel of zeros,  
slide down absence and emerge in a landscape  
where logic blooms upside down.  
It wasn't until it happened I understood  
there are seas where depths are warmer than surfaces,  
that a single sheet of white  
can shine fields of infinities.