

Hunters in the Snow

The depiction of snow in art
depends on shelter.
Brueghel was the first
to take winter to his heart—

seen from the sanctuary
of his window,
bonfires are a red mercy
against the ice-crusting snowdrifts
and the plaguey green of the sky

Those Alps on the horizon
(a mere grotesque) hark back
to the days when winter
had a dozen white ways to kill you—

frostbite, starvation, the slow fade
of hypothermia—a prehistory
of dread, heightening
the anticipation of a roast meat
a full woodshed

When night climbs down
those stark hunters on the hill
have homes to go to

Those skaters on the frozen pond
will probably survive till spring

Alison Fell

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