

This Shall Come to Pass

William Doreski

On the coldest day of the year
tree shadows striping the road
suggest a cosmic barcode
for something abstract to read.

Trekking on snow packed slick
by traffic, I feel too slight
to accept the Day of Judgment
rumored to be next Thursday
or maybe a week or month later.

Only half a mile from home
I'm an Antarctic explorer
lost on the Ross Ice shelf where
massive chunks are breaking off
to crash into the civilized world.

The cold strokes my scissoring legs
and crawls up under my parka.
It's a frightened little animal
that needs to cuddle for comfort.

It's a treacherous lover eager
to sin for the sake of betrayal.
It's a force of force rather
than the spirit of volition.

The long shadows of the trees
could be rungs of Jacob's Ladder.
Maybe I'm not just walking
but climbing into the glory
Sunday School promised to grant me.

The north wind plots behind my back.
The ghosts misting from the marsh
sparkle in the cynical sunlight,
offering to share their stories.

Breathe through my nose, not my mouth,
to keep my lungs healthy enough
to shout for someone to open
the golden gates before I notice
they're only the cheapest brass.

William Doreski lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire. His most recent book of poetry is *Mist in Their Eyes* (2021). He has published three critical studies, including *Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors*. His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in many journals.