

Snowshoe to Otter Creek

love lasts by not lasting

jack gilbert

I'm mapping this new year's vanishings:

lover, yellow house, the knowledge of surfaces.

This is not a story of return.

There are times I wish I could erase

the mind's lucidity, the difficulty of Sundays,

my fervor to be touched

by a woman two Februarys gone. What brings the body

back, grieved and cloven, tromping these woods

with nothing to confide in? New snow reassumes

the circling trees, the bridge above the creek

where I stand like a stranger to my life.

There is no single moment of loss, there is

an amassing. The disbeliever sleeps at an angle

in the bed. The orchard is a graveyard.

Is this the real end? Someone shoveling her way out

with cold intention? Someone naming her missing?

