

CATHARINE SAVAGE BROSMAN

Winter Sunset, Pike's Peak

There's fire to the west, around the peak
and stretching northward; it's Old Sol again,
a-lolling on his daybed. He'd been weak
at noon, and let the clouds prevail, but then

aroused, as if ashamed. A scarlet streak
shoots upward from the embers in a glen,
and in an aureole of green—a freak—
two birds pass, dark—a crow, a canyon wren;

while remnants of the overcast disguise
themselves as smoke, and shadowed snow that lies
along the mountain's clefts and shelves looks ashen,

—deep cold transformed in the beholder's eyes
to everything a fire signifies:
hearts frozen, then awakening to passion.

On the North Side

—For Patric

On the north side, snow is obstinate, staying on, despite recent sun and mild air during afternoon, in dense stands of pines, behind boulders, shrubbery, and knolls—rectangles, squares, curved patches, wedges, and half-moons—white shadows, though themselves in shade.

The spruce wear open cloaks and hoods thrown back. Snow lights the Rampart Range, of course, and also Zebulon's great peak, both east and western face, the dimple

copiously powdered and its tracery of clefts and ridges outlined well. The range and hillsides facing south are barren, though—dry, colorless. Seen from the air, on the flight northward yesterday, brown winter fields, plowed last year in patterns, reminded me of Braque and Gris—monochromatic canvases of circles fitted among squares. Here too, the scene is almost cubist, with planes of white in skewed arrangements. I'm on the north face

also—the darker slope, quicker of shadow, moving into night—with snow in my hair, but a heart's fire, glowing.

I remember driving, in the year 2000, from Grand Junction to Ouray, Durango, and Pagosa Springs, and then into New Mexico, with snow banks nearly all the way, the pavement covered, and new snow falling—nature taking back the road—and scarcely any other car; and how, in Taos finally, I thanked the spirit of the peaks,

and stood in awe beside the great blue spruce, where crystals of a final shower—melting as they hit my face—remained, each one set off, a jewel on a velvet mantle.

The great joy of my winter waited for me, still
ahead some years. And then we met after long patience, many
miles. We've missed the drop-offs and endured
the drought; we've squared the circle. In summer, we'll gaze
out along the slope, green from its snow bath, signaling.

Catharine Savage Brosman, who now lives in Houston, is Professor Emerita of French at Tulane University and Honorary Research Professor at the University of Sheffield (England). Her most recent collection of verse is *Range of Light* (LSU Press, 2007). Her new collection, *Breakwater*, will appear in 2009 at Mercer University Press, and another new volume, *Under the Pergola*, will be published by LSU Press in 2011. Her poems have appeared in the *Sewanee Review*, the *Southern Review*, *Critical Quarterly*, the *South Carolina Review*, the *Southwest Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *New England Review*, and many other magazines. French translations of her poems have been published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, *Europe*, and other French magazines.