

Martin Steingesser

MEDITATION

Only our breathing. I hold my love close, singing to myself, then whisper. She makes a sleep sound, soft response. . . We breathe together, falling—all of us, the planet, falling through space. This morning, I am stopping for nothing, ear to the ground, hearing what's learned not to listen for.

Oh, so un-American, stopping for the small drum, sleet at our window, rain in a tin cup; stopping for the sound of metal plows grumbling across ice; stopping for the locust tree beside the window, its low, slow groan, every branch sheathed in ice; stopping for each other, how we breathe,

all of us, the planet, falling through space. Imagine loggers coming to saw down the tree. I think of the fool who felled a giant spruce to plant a flagpole in front of his house. Hugging the trunk, I hear their chainsaws. I won't let go, I am stopping for nothing.

Will they return in my sleep? Why am I thinking this? Worry for trees or puffing myself up, old need driving this dreaming? There is a thwacking sounding somewhere. (Those *some* words: somewhere, sometime—words for blank spaces I'm working to fill.) In lamplight across the street, someone

bundled in jacket, hat and gloves swings away at snow on the hood of a pickup. I can hear water running in the plumbing, a clock ticking. . . I hold my love close. We are breathing together. I am stopping for nothing, listening and thinking and singing—this morning's soft shoe, whatever I please, holding love close.