

## LEAFLESS BRANCHES

bij Bart en Gerda

Were the trees having babies  
That wet December evening,  
Their legs spread open on the sheet  
Of an impassive polar sky?

No, now that they fly nearer  
And disappear over the roof,  
All twenty of them, I see  
They were just Canadian geese.

The window of this warm room  
Filled with cultivated talk  
Frames branches, thin and leafless,  
Night's ununiformed sentries.

Winter trees do not catch wind  
Or words or departing geese.  
They stick it out to the end,  
Prisoners awaiting their release.

MARCUS CUMBERLEGE