

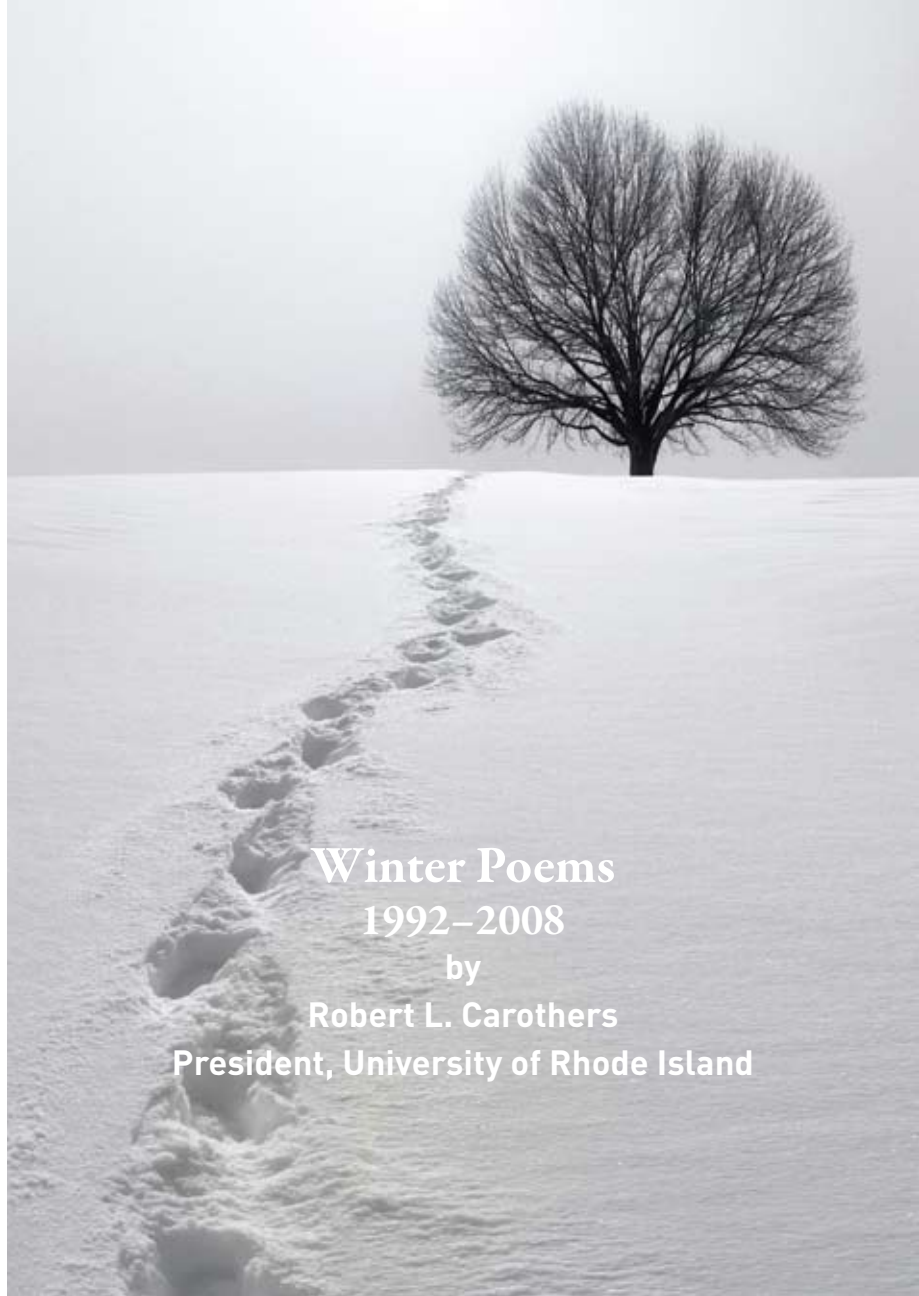
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Winter Poems



1992–2008



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by

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❁ 2008 ❁

And to all a good night...

1

For the last time we trim
this winter's tree, and sit by
the fire, waiting for the guests
to arrive. It has begun to snow.

2

So many have crossed the Quad
in rich September and proud May
and on this soft and sweet December's
eve, their tracks beneath the new snow.

3

Buildings have been built, wars won
and lost, a wedding dance, friends passed
and babies born, each in its season.
The black-eyed boy is grown and gone.

4

And now the room is filled again
with the laughter and the love
we wish for you, this last time
from the grand white house, at URI.

❁ 2007 ❁

Down at the Shore

No snow again,
and a warm wind rustles
leaves still green
near our front door.

Something has changed,
we think, remembering
fields of white while
Crosby crooned his winter's tale.

The house is ablaze with lights
And good friends still gather
around the fire. But outside the shore
crumbles beneath us. And it's not

just like the ones we used to know.

❁ 2006 ❁

Imagine they have all come home
this year, our old house on campus
filled with stories told and retold
in a warm kitchen where the dishes
are done at last, the leftovers bagged
and the toys herded into corners.

Later, before the fire, in blessed
quiet, the kids curled on one lap
or another, we sing without words
of those beside us and of those
now gone, raise a last toast to peace,
to our family, and to yours.

❁ 2005 ❁

Tom and Betty drive up
by Barlow and wave
to their sweet girl watching
for them at the door.

The chimes from the Quad ask,
'What child is this?' and she
comes running through the snow
a wonder, in a red wool cap.

❁ 2004 ❁

If ever there was a house made of memory,
then we have built it.

Inside tonight, the Class of '55 creates again
the wise men and women who taught them well,
winter walks across the silver Quad,
the lights of Green or Roosevelt still beacons in the night.

In memory, the boys are strong and clever
and kind. They catch their breath when
the women enter the room, smart and witty
and always beautiful. Together they have built cities,
given birth, made music and eased pain, promise fulfilled.

Oh, I know that we labor each day
far beneath this hazy heaven of memory,
where the black-eyed boy still leaves
snow angels in the soft glow of familiar stars.
I know it is a cold December and that all things fade.

But there are these nights, my friends,
there are these nights, in Kingston.

❁ 2003 ❁

This year there is another
at our tree. By firelight tonight
I see she has grown more slight
yet larger still our mother.

Jayne brings her a cup of tea,
and the black-eyed boy and his brother
hear again that ancient tale of wonder,
each blessing the other, and me.

❁ 2002 ❁

In the white lights of Christmas,
I remember her red dress
swirling across the dance floor
as the moon rose over the lake.

Asleep by the fire, the black-eyed boy
wanders through the white winter woods,
lost among the tall green spruce,
a red bird dancing somewhere overhead.

❁ 2001 ❁

In the winter of our towering grief
peace is a distant dream,
a sweet carol sung soft
beneath the drummer's heady beat.

The black eyed boy grown tall
walks with a soldier's step.
His golden face glows with
the light from a distant, deadly fire.

This year we hold each other a little closer
a little longer, and see again
the terrible beauty born, give
the precious gifts we have been given.

❁ 2000 ❁

Convocation

Soft snow sifts over the great shovels,
Silent this night in the moonlight.
High in the steel there is a tree
Shimmering bright white and blue.

The black-eyed boy climbs
To where he shouldn't be,
A star glittering in the dark sky,
A promise to the hushed crowd below.

❁ 1999 ❁

Stopping on snow
to watch the winter stars
herald the last new year
before the world begins again,

I see in the night
a brighter light glide
blinking down from that starry sky:
the black-eyed boy flies with reindeer.

❁ 1998 ❁

A Wild Winter Wind

A wild winter wind breaks boughs
in the grove of oak around the house,
spitting words so fierce even
a strong man fears for his life.

But inside the logs burn bright, and warm
the black-eyed boy lying on the couch,
the sweet spruce blinking red and blue.
He is singing softly to himself:

“Rhode Island born and Rhode Island bred...”
and I know just then that we will never die.
“Go Rhody,” I say to him, and we laugh,
even into a wild winter’s wind.

❁ 1997 ❁

A West Wind

Outside our winter window
the last golden oak leaves
rattle against a hard west wind,
driving before it the old year.

Inside, the black-eyed boy dreams
of a thousand daffodils
gathering their colors beneath
the snow, ready for another rising.

❁ 1996 ❁

Century Walk

At first snow, we walk slowly
the Century of names etched across the Quad:
Ham, Pezzullo, Hossack and more . . .
Where we have been.

Our black-eyed boy bounds ahead,
as always, leaping the years, twirling
in the last soft light . . .
Where we have yet to go.

❁ 1995 ❁

Providence

To honor tradition,
we meet under the clock
at Shepard's born again
tonight in the City's silver snow.

The black-eyed boy, ahead as always,
bursts through the doors newly opened to find
within these walls the gifts of wise men (and women too)
wisdom,
laughter,
His eyes filled with lights.

❁ 1994 ❁

The House glows
this winter's night,
lights bright across
the broad white lawn,
as if these old walls
cannot contain
the new life within.
We laugh together

at the black-eyed boy
on the bannister
polished by his sliding.
We know there is a world
filled with pain, a
pilgrim's veil of tears.
But not tonight,
not tonight.

❁ 1993 ❁

Winter Solstice

We thought the light would leave us
Altogether alone, and held each other dear,
As if to find in those tired eyes
The last flicker of the dying year.

And lit again by laughter, and yet again by tears,
The embers of our winter hearts
Began once more to glow—red and green and silver,
Bright moonlight on the settling snow.

❁ 1992 ❁

Settlers come east, we trace trails
white across the winter quad
to Taft Hall and Davis, then home by Green,
aglow in this last, first snow.

The end of the beginning, we think,
and the second century at hand:
the black-eyed boy among the old spruce,
laughter, chimes, and still new Hope.