

Richard Hoffman

DECEMBER

I love days
like this, alone,
the one clock
in the front hall
counting
peace, peace, peace.
I can hear
snow ticking
on the windows,
now and then a
crumbling on the roof,
and outside,
stumbling through drifts,
my old griefs
calling my name.

HERE GOES

for Rick Wile

It's time for me to dance
one of the necessary dances
again, the wet dog, maybe,
(stand back!) or the one
I call the suffering snake,
where I take off my clothes
and, naked, kick them
at the gathering circle
of the curious, the difficult
dance that says yes,
I am naked, but no,
I'm not crazy. Can you
not make the distinction?
Have you forgotten
certain necessary dances
require this sloughing,
this touching earth and air?
Can you not see this is grief?

HUMILITY

Half a life to open
one gummed eye,

and now I need one hand
to shield it from the light.

And I should say what I
believe I see with certainty?

VANITAS

Consider the carrot:
note, in its skin,
its knuckled
story, scuffed and
scarred, bent
by dry rock, twisted
toward water;
hear, from its look
(as if you could listen
the length
of its time) the rasp
and crunch of its
augur in earth, its
labor on behalf
of its green crown's
sunlit, delicate,
wind-blown glory
we throw away.