

The Stiller of Atoms

The road is impassable, a shelf on the side of a mountain the
wind keeps sweeping clear to fill with possessions for the new
year: fresh snow, and the North Country light
that Polaris, king of hunger and the shivering animals, king of
branches that snap in the cold, sends as its indifferent
benediction.

King of men who slip on the ice and lie there, deliciously warm.
Wonder for things that meant so much the subject never came up.
A handful of nutmeg, essence of pine, a candle burning in the
window. Essence of you, my father, on the porch in your pjs
and slippers, unwilling to come in.

Stiller of Atoms, you lay your palm on our foreheads as if they
were burning with fever, nightmares, as if that were an act of
kindness.

You lay your palm on Polaris, king of distances we may not cross
and will never understand. You quiet the wind.

Hush, Little One, none of us are lost. We are all still here. None of
us are ever lost. None of us are going to leave you.