

Lisa Olstein

WINDY TODAY

Intention: clear. Left at the light, straight through the light, stop at the light. Cold air like snow falling, quiet in the parking lot—laundromat neon flickering, yews cut in heroic shapes of balustrades, columns, each one a thousand needled caryatids, faces turned to the ground.

Intention: clear. Little gray clouds trucking overhead under a finer layer of gauzy stuff the sun shines through like a moon. Anything that turns or bows has done so. That which stands straight through it all is left stiff-limbed against the sky. We huddle for warmth as if in a cave made of snow. A bird lives at the center of a cave of its own feathers, little pocket of trapped air.

Intention: muddled. Losing focus at every turn. Pay attention when you're driving. Stop steering with your elbows. The danger for which you keep your hands free has passed; we must prepare for another.

Intention: wait a minute. Breath steams my lenses as if the clouds reach down with their mouths. They fill me like open air.

Intention: careful review. We're on Chapter 17: the Hungarians have offered their canon to the Byzantines; one hundred and fifty thousand Turks camp against their upper banks; they refuse it as they refused surrender and a small kingdom of Greeks; the city is divided, no patriarch sits on the throne. We know what will happen. We've read this chapter before.

Intention: liquid crystal. Snow fills the field, nothing treads upon it, not even the wind. Air hovers, waits. We wait. We'll wait here.