

One Can Never Be Sure

Awakening to a soft glimmer
casting morning light across Lake Champlain,
I realize,
one can never be sure,
on a checkered November morning such as this one.

In this old kitchen water simmers in the tea pot.
The bubbling sound becomes a lullaby,
pretending the world is calm for now.
Yet the wind howls.
Penetrating and lonely.

Clothes are frozen on the line again.
I step onto the back porch and see
the dense cuffs and sleeves.
They appear to be stamped in stiff and rumpled shapes.
Pant legs bonded together-
I imagine them clutching one another
in the dark night,
fortified, against the bitter wind.

I walk toward the lake each morning
to be sure
that she is holding her scattered islands
as always.
Ancient offspring of the Appalachian mountains,
I face the wind with the same conviction as they do
steadfast, like every November.

A north wind whips a cold gust of air across thick ice.
And here from one angle,
soft eddies of feathered snow form along the lake's edge.
Soft images recede as the bitter cold air
stings my face with her sharp edges of glass.

One can never be sure,
so ruthless is this wind.

N.L. Reynolds