

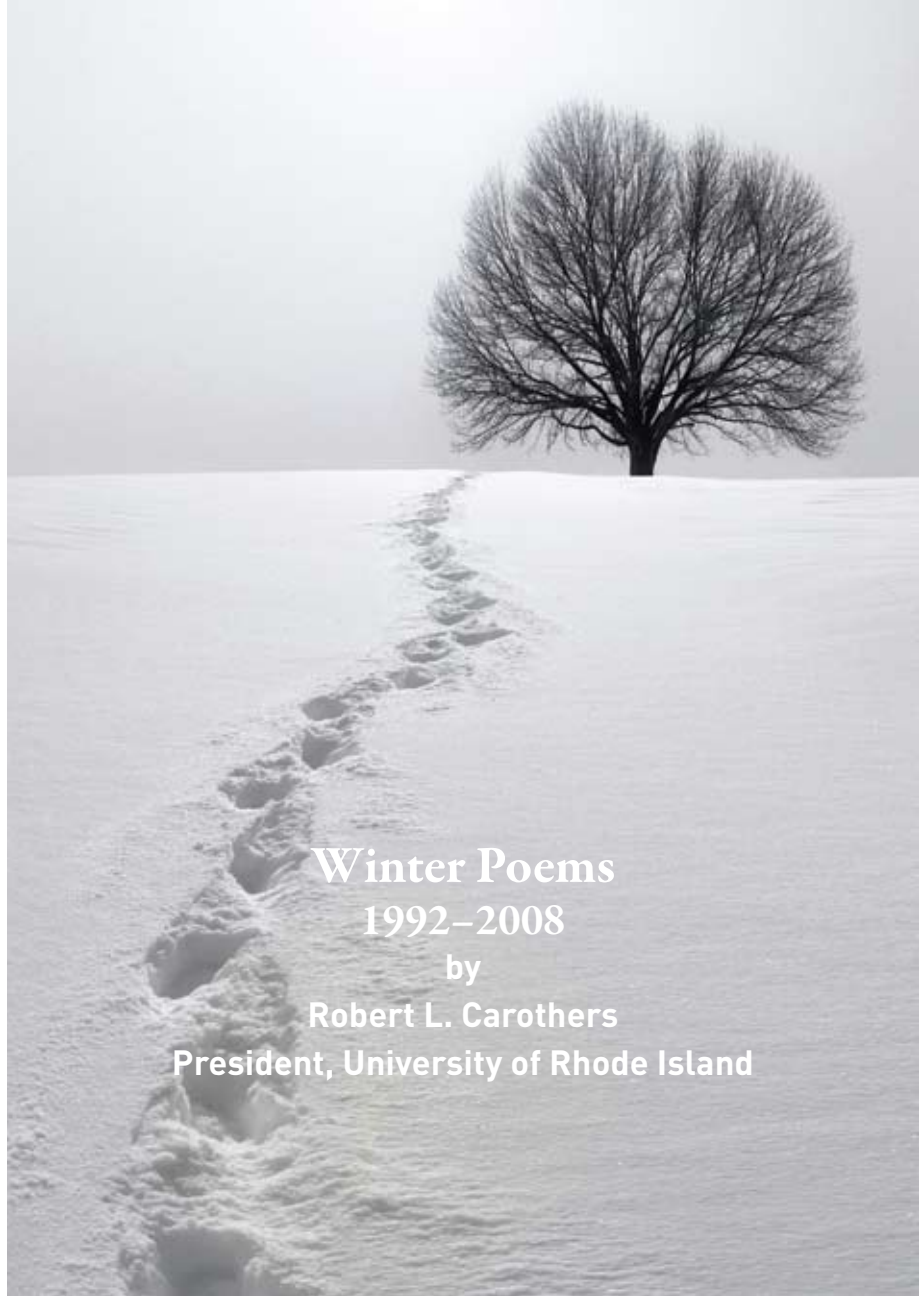
THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.  
PAID FOR THROUGH PRIVATE FUNDING.  
MMVIII

## Winter Poems



1992–2008



Winter Poems

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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.