

LEAFLESS BRANCHES

bij Bart en Gerda

Were the trees having babies
That wet December evening,
Their legs spread open on the sheet
Of an impassive polar sky?

No, now that they fly nearer
And disappear over the roof,
All twenty of them, I see
They were just Canadian geese.

The window of this warm room
Filled with cultivated talk
Frames branches, thin and leafless,
Night's ununiformed sentries.

Winter trees do not catch wind
Or words or departing geese.
They stick it out to the end,
Prisoners awaiting their release.

MARCUS CUMBERLEGE