

Holding On

Last day of the year. Rain
 clouds broke. Clear but cold
 enuf to chill a case of beer
 on the back porch. Talk
 of the year. I made a few
 poems, a pail of beer, tended
 the green & yellow garden. Learning
 to play a two dollar bamboo flute
 when the sun shines. Carol made bread.
 Whole wheat, rye, & the sweet
 pumpkin. Gave birth to a
 Libre son. Albion.
 Robins peck at fallen apples
 in the yard. One lone yellow apple
 on the bare tree. Talk
 of spring. Holding on.

-- Charles Tidler

Ganges, B.C., Canada

On The High Plateau

Mornings the white bear has left,
 his tracks in the mud heading for the Sierra;
 later peons trudge scarred beneath their grub hoes
 past lake Cuauhtemoc with its reeds and sleeping ducks,
 at night beat on barrels, tear out their throats,
 or squat talking in the railroad yard among the stacked
 logs
 as darkness pools around them.
 beneath meteor showers the plain stretches away to the
 mountains.
 except the Mennonites driving carriages,
 huffing in their wool coats,
 sit in their cold churches
 sobering up
 and the bride in a starched blouse,
 lips two drawn wires, presents herself
 into the putty hand
 of her lover, etched with letters.
 past midnight there is no moon or stars
 except babies dying, frost on the station windows;
 and kneeling with the light you find
 the tracks again, ridged, flecked with brads of snow,
 your breath steel. and the corpse of a woman,
 feet first, muscles frozen
 shoots over, teeth exposed, gold hair streaming...