

he wore that coat year 'round.
said something 'bout
how they used to drop
tin foil from the bombers
to fuzzy up the radar.
and the kids believed it,
said you couldn't see him
pass in the dark,
though you could hear
the scrape-scrapin' of his coat.

he said he was too ornery to die,
but here's how we found him:
wearing that coat full of tin,
standing on that book of magic,
one crooked finger reaching
for the light socket,
and, godless old goat,
calling the moon by name.

REFRIGERATOR GOTHIC I

she hides her valuables
in the refrigerator
to protect them from fire.
that must make you
the most precious baggage of all,
stuffed into the freezer
like a misplaced, pituitary embryo.

she said she wanted to keep you
just the way you were.
with that tiny, tattooed teardrop
tugging at your profile,
how could she ever let you go?
but you were so untouched,
so complete and self-possessed,
until you woke from that nap
with blood running down your neck.
it was too late for regrets.
your lips were turning blue.

whenever the compressor kicks in,
you find yourself humming
right along with it.
it must be the freon
she injects into your veins.
how you hate the stuff.
that first heady rush
sends you skidding
into frightful shivering spells

followed by slow, protracted dreams
of icebergs sliding
into the Greenland Sea.

but here's your little secret.
a puddle, hardly bigger
than a footprint,
has condensed on the floor.
and you've contrived
a high, chirping noise in your sinuses.
it's just loud enough to wake her.
the floorboards creak
when she comes to investigate,
and the moon collaborates,
dipping into the trees.
you hold your frosty breath
as she opens the door,
slips on the puddle,
and pitches headfirst for your arms,
cast forever
into an abject, falling posture.

-- Chuck Oliveros

Atlanta GA

BUFFER

SENSE OF PROPORTIONS

tugs on discarded
pant leg & growls.
I tug back & growl
but let him dominate.
He's very small &
needs to feel tough.

Wool blend shirts are
too wide in shoulders.
Bought extra large to
get sleeves to reach.
Sacrificed sense of
proportions for
Korean price.

-- Phil Weidman

North Highlands CA