December Poem

snow does not begin as mercy

it comes first
as weather

a long gray lowering
over rooftops
and bare branches

then the trucks appear

orange lights turning
in the early dark

men in heavy coats
leaning over steering wheels

spreading salt
before anything has fallen

faith looks foolish
from the curb

white grains skitter
over black asphalt

small stars thrown down
for tires
for boots
for the old woman crossing
with milk in one hand

and a prescription

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December Poem

in the other

all this labor
against what has not yet happened

I have known prayers
less practical than this

a city preparing
to be wounded

by beauty

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