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Bearings

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Bearings

Constituent
memories of a large memory.
--Louise Gluck

The day awoke this morning
naked and white
as it is every morning
fresh milk in a battered pitcher

but today the world
is dissolved in a blizzard
hills and trees blotted out
by a pointillistic white sheet

I was but also
for not seeing my friends
was not

just as years before lost in fog at sea
navigating by sound and the scent
of spruce on shore

surf breaking in all directions
and the same with the smell of spruce

a fish broke the surface
all the colors of sunset in its skin
for a second I heard music from its depths
then it was gone

strange how all five senses when brought to bear
awaken old dormant ones

I steered my craft in the direction
of the fish's tail
and made it back to harbor

now in the white-out
my inner compass frozen
I wondered if that day I had drowned

I ate a little
drank some tea
read for a while in a sieve-like way
decided I hadn't drowned

but the wind in the vanished spruce
sounded surf-like
and gazing hard at the window
I saw a fish rend the sheet