

Classic Poetry Series

Phillis Levin
- poems -

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Phillis Levin()

Phillis Levin is the author of four volumes of poetry, including *May Day*, which was published by Penguin in 2008 (pub date for this collection was April 29, 2008). Poet's other books of poems are *Temples and Fields* (University of Georgia Press, 1988), winner of the Norma Farber First Book Award; *The Afterimage* (Copper Beech Press, 1995); and *Mercury* (Penguin, 2001). I am the editor of *The Penguin Book of the Sonnet: 500 Years of a Classic Tradition in English* (Penguin Books, 2001). Poet's honors and awards include a Fulbright Fellowship to Slovenia, the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship, a 2003 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and a 2007 Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Philip Levin is a professor of English and poet-in-residence at Hofstra University and is a visiting professor in the graduate creative writing program at New York University.

Part

Of something, separate, not
Whole; a role, something to play
While one is separate or parting;

Also a piece, a section, as in
Part of me is here, part of me
Is missing; an essential portion,

Something falling to someone
In division; a particular voice
Or instrument (also the score

For it), or line of music;
The line where the hair
Is parted. A verb: to break

Or suffer the breaking of,
Become detached,
Broken; to go from, leave,

Take from, sever, as in
Lord, part me from him,
I cannot bear to ever

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The Blizzard

Now that the worst is over, they predict
Something messy and difficult, though not
Life-threatening. Clearly we needed

To stock up on water and candles, making
Tureens of soup and things that keep
When electricity fails and phone lines fall.

Igloos rise on air conditioners, gargoyles
Fly and icicles shatter. Frozen runways,
Lines in markets, and paralyzed avenues

Verify every fear. But there is warmth
In this sudden desire to sleep,
To surrender to our common condition

With joy, watching hours of news
Devoted to weather. People finally stop
To talk to each other - the neighbors

We didn't know were always here.
Today they are ready for business,
Armed with a new vocabulary,

Casting their saga in phrases as severe
As last night's snow: damage assessment,
Evacuation, emergency management.

The shift of the wind matters again,
And we are so simple, so happy to hear
The scrape of a shovel next door.

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