Sylvia Platt

WINTER LANDSCAPE, WITH ROOKS (1956)

Water in the millrace, through a sluice of stone,

plunges headlong into that black pond

where, absurd and out-of-season, a single swan

floats chast as snow, taunting the clouded mind

which hungers to haul the white reflection down.

The austere sun descends above the fen,

an orange cyclops-eye, scorning to look

longer on this landscape of chagrin;

feathered dark in thought, I stalk like a rook,

brooding as the winter night comes on.

Last summer’s reeds are all engraved in ice

as is your image in my eye; dry frost

glazes the window of my hurt; what solace

can be struck from rock to make heart’s waste

grow green again? Who’d walk in this bleak place?

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