

# New Poetry by Lisa Stice



Caspar David Friedrich, "The Sea of Ice," (1823-24).

## Headstrong

*I'm sorry* catches in the throat  
and bruises in that wavering  
hesitation like a rock falling  
back to earth. See how it curves  
under the skin, twists and cuts

as it hugs the voice box.

*I forgive* sways like a tamarack–  
hackmatack, red larch, juniper,  
larix laricina–of the low-lands  
with roots in cool mud and branches  
in the soft air where we hold  
the belief we are stronger than wind.

*The end* is as blue as slag and twice  
as worthless. This is where I say  
I never meant it, and this is where  
you say it doesn't matter anymore  
because words are less than  
clouds and leaves and stone.



Nicolai Fechin, Portrait of Varya Adoratskaya (1914)

## Daughter

we are raising fire  
a shock-headed girl  
in this cold season

when you start a fire  
be to windward, wait  
for it to break out within

mind now what I say  
remain quiet  
for when fire breaks

we call these special days  
nothing to me is sweeter  
than a crackling flame

*\* some words borrowed from Struwwelpeter translated by Heinrich Hoffman ("any thing to me is sweeter," "shock-headed peter," "they crackle so, and spit, and flame," "mind now, Conrad, what I say") "The Attack by Fire;" The Art of War by Sun Tzu ("material for raising fire," "special days," "days of rising wind," "when fire breaks," "remain quiet," "wait for it to break out within," "when you start a fire, be to windward")*



Jacob Hoefnagel, "Orpheus Charming the Animals"

## Homes Will Be Stripped Bare

this is one world

and this is another

the borders merely

traced out on the ground

with a small stick

in one world, animals:

zebras, giraffes,

lions, horses,

and dinosaurs

bide their time

stand together

quietly encamped

kept in readiness

for a decision

made in a single day

to overthrow their kingdom

cause commotion at home

the animals know

there is no time to ponder

just march to the place

beyond ordinary rules

\* some words borrowed from "Weak Points and Strong" ("the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground," "quietly encamped"), "The Attack by Fire" ("bide your time," "kept in readiness"), "The Use of Spies" ("there will be commotion at home"), "Attacks by Stratagem" ("overthrows their kingdom"), "Maneuvering" ("ponder before you make a move"), "Laying Plans" ("beyond the ordinary rules"), and "Waging War" (the homes of the people will be stripped bare") *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu



Fairy Tales from Hans Christian Andersen (1914), Doubleday

## The Book Closes

words become a strange  
dream            an explosion  
the releasing of the trigger  
another shovelful of earth  
to plant secrets            a storm  
breaking with the momentum  
of a round stone and yet  
no real disorder at all  
just the melodies that can never  
be heard            the colors  
that can never be seen  
just like the little birds  
that fly far away            further  
than we will ever know

*\* some words borrowed from "The Traveling Companion" by Hans Christian Anderson trans. Erik Christian Haugaard ("he dreamed a strange dream," "another shovelful of earth," "the words became a picture," "the little birds flew far into the world," "the storm broke") and from "Energy" The Art of War by Sun Tzu ("give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard," "more hues than can ever be seen," "releasing of the trigger,"*



*“and yet no real disorder at all,” “the momentum of a round stone”)*