

Cusp of Autumn/Winter

There is no imprecision on the cusp between autumn and winter. The zones surrounding seasons possess their own identities, barbed wire assurances, languages and passwords.

Now the mid-November shift into down and flannel and influenza and last minute shopping and doctor bills, the acres of paper reindeer sleighs and angels. You look up from your desk. You don't need to consult your watch. Air is gray as opium and it's time for a fix. You sense

this in the holly wreaths, in cedar and ribbon. It's in the brandy. It's the essence of red, what turns it festive and indelible. I'm

prepared to hock my mother's silver, the brooch and cameo, the ruby ring. I want to stay up all night for a month and wait for Santa. Maybe this year.

The edges are elegant under a grainy pewter half-light thin as razor. We are the architects of the concentration camps where we barely live. We know ourselves in the damp beneath street lamps waiting for strangers.

I am the one carrying red carnations and counting my change.

I must remember that.