

JOHN SIBLEY WILLIAMS

[migrations; conceptions]

Dogless chains weave around old naked oaks. Links rusted but still holding. Snow browned by exhaust and yellowed by drunken boys and harbored in a makeshift porcelain shrine a virgin statue reaches from the neighbor's lawn out to the main road like a traffic cop. New England again, and I'm too late for the wake, nine months early for Christmas. Another in betweenness. With that same covered bridge a few miles north and all our birds a week's drive south. Candles. Dark curtains. Moths collecting around the light within. This is music best set to rain. Not white. Not pluming breath. This house would be easier to bear if burning. Not here. Not still here. Before the end she lined black stones around its edges to call the birds home. I try to understand. Dogs and stones and birds and light and everything hibernating between us, I am trying to pull another body out of my body. To make this song.

JOHN SIBLEY WILLIAMS is the editor of two poetry anthologies and the author of nine collections. A five-time Pushcart nominee and winner of the Philip Booth Award, American Literary Review Poetry Contest, and Vallum Award for Poetry, John serves as editor of *The Inflectionist Review*. Previous publishing credits include *The Midwest Quarterly*, *december*, *Third Coast*, *Baltimore Review*, *Nimrod*, *Hotel Amerika*, and *RHINO*.