

First Ice

We wake up as the darkness begins
giving way, first to an indigo

glow like laundry bluing,
phosphorescent and implausibly dense.

Shades of trees appear, then trees,
then a dreamy, scintillant

stillness unfurls as light, as landscape
under a spell. A fat sleekness

blisters and thickens the porch; in the pasture
grass blades bow down in glass sleeves.

The woods are themselves and not
themselves in their subtle glister,

the way a truly glamorous woman,
my grandmother used to say (charm bracelets
rustling),

conceals every seam and trace
of her artifice, leaving pure effect.

Inside, a chef on T.V. makes aspic
while we wait for the forecast.

*One strives for the clearest, thinnest
gel, he is saying; one wants to illuminate*

one's terrine, not to thicken it!
And as he spreads his glaze, I see the soul

rise from its loaf and lay its glossy
immaterial bliss across that surface of meat &

salt with its scallion *fleur-de-lis*,
making it marvelous.

As the world is, today-- as it was
in the beginning, that last instant

water, matter and light were one,
each distinct, not yet separate.