

Bill Siverly

Spring Snow in February

Osoberry and snowdrops bloomed early this year
and daffodils are on the verge. Snow fell over night,
insulating buds against the hard freeze of the polar vortex
driven south over Oregon by warming arctic air.

A few days later snow rapidly melted, releasing
osoberry leaves like a swarm of green butterflies.
Spring snow stands for all things passing through,
as transient as the years of our lives.

A hundred million years from now an alien stratigrapher
could tell that our civilization once existed,
by then compressed to a layer thin as a cigarette paper.
From Sappho's "white city of Mytilene" to Frank O'Hara's
"funny New York," all works and days go under earth's lid.

A few days after the shooter has slaughtered the kids,
souls take flight, like a swarm of invisible butterflies.
All of us left behind grieve death before its time,
as children vanish like spring snow before our eyes.

Where we come from and where we go remains
an absolute mystery. But on the way we need to care
for every tendril spring can raise and every born child
who now must find safety among us and survive.