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A Mouse Crosses Flanders Road in Woodbury

Having survived a night
Of moon-eyed, moon-faced owls
Somewhere in fields off Flanders Road
Along the Woodbury-Bethlehem line,
On Thursday at six a.m.,
When the temperature is zero degrees
Fahrenheit,
In the light of the waning crescent moon
And my dipped headlights,
A field mouse descends from the frozen moon rocks
Of snow plowed from the abbey driveway
And motors across the road
To a gully and upward into a stone wall
To curl up in a nest
Warm with the heat of his kind
On a bed of moss, pine needles,
And dryer lint.

There is safety
Inside the stones of ancient walls
So long as the snakes sleep.

Little mouse,
Your thundering heart
Beats in my ears.
Pray you, be still, traveler,
And rest.
Still my heart.