Bessie, you've made space dizzy
with your perfected technique for snow:
white spatters and a dry brush
feathering everything in the world

seem to make the firmament fly.
Four roads converge on the heart of town,
this knot of white and yellow houses
angling off kilter, their astigmatic windows

almost all in rows. Lucky the skater
threading the yellow tavern's quilt-sized pond,
the yellow dogs who punctuate the village
where our occupations are chasing

and being chaste, sleighing and sledding
and snowshoeing from house to house
in our conical, flamelike hats.
Even the barns are sliding in snow,

though the birches are all golden
and one maple blazes without being consumed.
Is it from a hill nearby we're watching,
or somewhere in the sky? Could we be flying

on slick runners down into the village?
Is that mare with the elegant legs
truly the size of a house,
and is this the store where everyone bought

those pointed hats, the snowshoes that angle
in contradictory directions?
Isn't that Rin Tin Tin, bigtongued
and bounding and in two places at once?

Down there in the world's corner two children
steal away onto the frozen pond,
carrying their toboggan. Even the weathervanes
--bounding fish, a sailing stag--look happy.

The houses are swaying, Bessie,
and nothing is grounded in shadow,
set loose by weather and art
from gravity's constraints.

And though I think this man is falling,
is it anything but joyous,
the arc his red scarf
transcribes in the air?

Mark Doty