

## ARCTIC HEGIRA

On the first run through  
there's no hint, none  
of the crimp  
so free a disturbance  
of air might bear. But  
by the fifth repeat  
silences freeze  
the loop shut, there  
is nervous experimentation  
with starting, so, slow,  
or moving on, too fast, as if  
one could hex change  
out of the scheme.  
In time, a beat, one gives in.  
If it really has to be done  
then it might as well be done  
well; what needs to be done  
may be accomplished  
with style, even verve. To crimp is to gash  
the flesh of a fish, to make it crisp  
when cooked. To be crimped  
is to feel those gashes, to think oneself  
into the knife, the skin, the pattern so  
random, so imposed.  
In time, one's own, one  
breaks,  
free. What  
was soundly bound  
shatters, all jag now,  
shrapnel, in hap-  
hazard, dissonant flight  
to far corners of meaning, and  
because, simply  
because  
that can't last, a  
coming together, in the sound  
one's breath makes in the arctic,  
as ice crystals form,  
and fall, in  
tinkling  
accord.