

Mark Pawlak

Hill Town Satori,

Wellspring House, Ashfield, Mass.

--for Preston Browning

Monday, March 12.

Curvy, tree-lined, two-lane:
maples', oaks' ancient trunks

east-facing sides
plastered with snow,

snapped boughs
at their feet;

branches and twigs piled
at road shoulders.

*Police log, 10:49: Report of deceased deer in snow bank at bottom of Ashfield Mtn.
Road. ACO advised.*

*

Monday, March 12.

Backroad sugar shack:
windows steamed,

several open a crack,
vapors escaping;

wood smoke's
sweet scent.

Police log, 13:97: Loose cows at Pfersick Road, owner advised.

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Monday, March 12.

Neglected orchard's
gnarled trunks,

riot of bare branches
in need of pruning,

one shriveled apple
still clinging.

*Police log, 18:27: Traffic stop, MV towed to owner's residence, no working headlights,
Route 116/Plainfield Road.*

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Tuesday, March 13.

The gravel driveway's
entire length

ankle deep
in overnight snow,

pristine but for
two tire treads;

rabbittracks
along one shoulder.

*Police log, 11:42: Passing motorist reported heavy ice buildup at intersection of Hawley
Road and Suburban Drive, Highway Department advised.*

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Wednesday, March 14.

Bridal white field
back of house

unblemished but for
two converging tracks

one hare, one feline--
ferule cat? bobcat?--

converging,
then parting again.

Without incident?

Without incident!

Police log, 08:39: Loose dog reported in area of Baptist Corner Road, ACO advised.

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Thursday, March 15.

Outside bathroom window, icicles
catching afternoon sun, dripping;

inside, toilet seat up,
me tinkling.

*Police log, 07:49: Report of open door at Buckland Road residence, checked same, found
to be secure.*

*

Thursday, March 15.

Two desiccated moths
between window

pane and screen
hang from threads

of last summer's
spider web.

*Police log, 10:41: Medical emergency, Baptist Corner Road, assisted Ashland Fire and
Highland Ambulance.*

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Friday, March 16.

Snow, falling straight as the sentinel pines at field's edge. Pewter sky too heavy to lift: predawn light yet at 7 AM. Plow passes on main road; after an interval, a pickup with headlights on; another interval, another pickup, headed the other direction. Snow now falling slant, towering pine tops swaying. Blurred outline of a hunched man walking beyond the tree line where sidewalk borders road. Ancient maples line driveway: white beards growing in their crotches, upper halves of boughs, branches lace-draped, gaping knot holes' lower lips frothy. Chorus of upper branches dancing in unison; one snapped twig hangs vertically from the crotch of another, jittery as a compass needle. Now a snow devil twirls across the field, exists stage left.

Police log, 09:27: Wood stove malfunction, Watson Spruce Corner Road, assisted on scene with Fire Department.

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Friday, March 16.

Towering, many-branched, girthy maples;
slender, fish-netted oaks;

straight-arrow, beech saplings; droopy, snow-laden spruce;
hangdog rhododendron.

Garden shed, cordwood, fence posts and rails
all snow-capped;

flat, sloping, peaked, and gabled roof-tops
blanketed;

composter, brush pile, patio table, bird feeder
sugar-frosted.

Snow-covered sedan
wind-sculpted.

Police Log, 11:48: Report of large pothole at Baptist Corner and South Street, causing damage to vehicles, MA DOT District 1 advised.

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Saturday, March 17.

Bent maple bough
outside window

its tip snapped-off
under weight of snow

curved like a lens--
the focus of all my attention.

Police log, 11:59: Tree limb on wires Apple Valley Road, same on fire, assisted Ashfield Fire and Eversource Power.

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Saturday, March 17.

Brass bed frame
in roadside field

just the head and foot 'boards'
visible in deep snow.

"What cheer! What cheer!
What cheer!"

comments Cardinal
perched high in a tree.

*Police log, 13:14: Call to Mass Highway District 1; one of the school zone amber lights
on Route 112 near Sanderson not functioning.*

Mark Pawlak is the author of nine poetry collections and editor of six anthologies. His most recent book is *Reconnaissance: New and Selected Poems and Poetic Journals 2005-2015* (Hanging Loose 2016). He has a personal essay in the anthology appearing this summer (2018) "Denise Levertov in Company," Univ. of So. Carolina Press.