

JOHN N. MILLER

North of Our Suburbs

The children, moon-faced hooded appetites,
Each a separate bundle, sleep.
His woman chews slowly on a thong
Of sealskin—always the patient worker,
Always the body waiting for him
With her moist, leering eyes.
Tonight will be no different. No one
Trudges through the snow to visit.

He knows his function, knows the ins and outs
Of her through all the three and twenty
Variants described by tribal lore—
Yet, as with their many words for cold
White fallen crystals, there is only
One primal referent, recurring
Night after endless winter night
Beneath her warming fur.

Surely some day someone from afar,
Keen with hunger, will arrive for
Hospitality. His woman then
Will help the strange man enter
While he, joyous, primed with new blood
Surging in his family member,
Will watch and learn and later celebrate
This novelty possessed.