

# WINTER NEWS

Poetry by John Haines and Elaine Cohen  
Music by Alan Chan

**Brittany Anjou**, vibraphone  
**Greg Chudzik**, bass  
**Alan Chan**, composer / conductor  
**Joe Hertenstein**, drums / percussion  
**Sean Sonderegger**, multi-reeds  
**K. Page Stuart**, voice  
**Harvey Valdes**, guitar

December 21, 2012, 10 p.m.  
The Stone  
New York City

## **PROGRAM**

In January

If the Owl Calls Again

Denali Road

Snowy Night

Christmas, 1962

The Tundra

Postlude

## IN JANUARY

A fine sub-zero afternoon. The Hudson at Croton is choked, choppy with ice, a trillion rose-cut diamonds glinting off the cobalt waves. The cliffs on the opposite shore are finely etched, a rare clarity, like pain.

At the station I board the express rushing to where I once lived a lifetime in five years. At Grand Central I see you in the crowd. Oh, it wasn't you after all.  
Your double. Or not. If only. My heart jumps.  
You were my love terrorist.

I regain myself. I have no plans, I join the snaking mass of people. Avoid the subway. I must breathe.  
Walking west I recall how we once bought a fake Rolex from a con man in Times Square.  
It worked for almost a year. Careless, I lost it.

The blue hour comes on strong. Alone with old hungers I remember your sudden appearance on Sixth Avenue after a long absence. Your smile. How we dined on blue crabs and walked in a summer mist.  
How I wanted to believe your lies. You lied so beautifully. I remember the last time I saw you. How I walked away.  
Years later, like yesterday.

~ Elaine Cohen

## From *Winter News* by John Haines

### IF THE OWL CALLS AGAIN

at dusk  
from the island in the river,  
and it's not too cold,

I'll wait for the moon  
to rise,  
then take a wing and glide  
to meet him.

And when the morning climbs  
the limbs  
we'll part without a sound,

fulfilled, floating  
homeward as the cold world  
awakens.

(1960)

We will not speak,  
But hooded against the frost  
Soar above  
the alder flats, searching  
with tawny eyes.

And then we'll sit  
in the shadowy spruce  
and pick the bones  
of careless mice,

while the long moon drifts  
toward Asia  
and the river mutter  
in its icy bed.

## **DENALI ROAD**

By the Denali road, facing  
north, a battered chair  
in which nothing but the wind  
was sitting.

And farther on  
toward evening, an old man  
with a vague smile,  
his rifle rusting in his arms.

(1962)

## **SNOWY NIGHT**

This is like a place  
we used to know,  
but stranger  
and filled with the cold  
imagination of a frozen  
sea, in which  
the moon is anchored  
like a ghost  
in heavy chains.

## **CHRISTMAS, 1962**

A soft wind blows  
across the islands of anger  
and sadness.

The astonished refugee rises  
and comes now,  
bearing in his white hands  
the strange, unshackled  
gift of himself.

(1962)

## THE TUNDRA

The tundra is a living  
body, warm in the grassy  
autumn sun; it gives off  
the odor of crushed  
blueberries and gunsmoke.

In the tangled lakes  
of its eyes a mirror of ice  
is forming, where  
frozen gut-piles shine  
with a dull, rosy light.

Coarse, laughing men  
with their women;  
one by one the tiny campfires  
flaring under the wind.

Full of blood, with a sound  
like clicking hoofs,  
the heavy tundra slowly  
rolls over and sinks  
in the darkness.

## **CREDITS**

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John Haines, *News from the Glacier:  
Selected Poems 1960-1980*. 1982 by John Haines.  
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## **SPECIAL THANKS**

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