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An Interdiction Is Addressed to the Hero

Kathy Ungerer

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AN INTERDICTION IS ADDRESSED TO THE HERO

It is closeted, fear, wrapped
in the old coats, hung like a button
on one thread, head of the huntsman,
his hounds, the Gabriel Ratchets
dozing in boots, in high laced shoes.
If your cob isn't shod, don't. Madness
has been the simple cure. Stand in the stream.

He is putting on his jacket, going out;
his family at supper, the usual
burr of words. Inside his knife a new
use stiffened, threatened the sleepless
dream of the spoons. Some dull
thing now, waits on the hill, revolving
night in its big paws. Its reach narrows.
This has always been the solace:
sudden prick of the stars,
the meadow's coursing blow.

THE INTERDICTION IS VIOLATED

What he wouldn't do: watching kin
chew gristle, granny
shucking nuts. And poised, his
boots hungry, his own laugh slicing
sky from snow like solstice. He won't
fall back, each test passed gamely,
the racket of the hunt, the empty
lair. Has it come on foot, sneaked
up, flown down, begun to act?

Out in the field the snow
drifts, tracks proliferate, score
some noiseless hymn. Each mound **might tender**
gifts: old apples, crone's dugs, December's
holdings, frozen mice, their eyes
more bright than sight allows.

Hart's tongue, held to loss, he
shuts his ears. What tunnels
in his bones has torn the hem
of all anatomy.