

a winter graveyard by ted slater

reaching the white gardens

i stretch my legs over the fallow roadside bank

it's not so frigid and bleak today as it has been
the sky's not the gray and oppressive one of recent days
nor is it quite as dismal

now

here in the cemetery

kicking through drifts, my feet wet to the socks

i pass by iced tombstones and snow-crueted memorials

i'm not really looking for anything

but a feeling

here an oversnowed footbridge

here a burial mound hiding autumn's pine cones

here arthritic glass knuckles

cling from the crunchy skin of a leafless clicking lightning tree
rigid and chilly they grasp
lightly popping against each other

a clear drop hangs jiggling

and falls

tick

pocking the snow's surface

or sneaking down a worm tunnel it's made

before heading back, i haunch down in the snow

at the grave of someone's friend

and listen

to the ticking