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Nosing in through a blizzard over Denver  
 at thirty thousand feet  
 I think what the earth covers at Lindenmeier there far away to the north  
 those men we never found  
 of ten millennia ago  
 but still  
 finding the heavy-headed  
 beasts of the gone time, finding  
 in the end  
 how short one's own existence,  
 one pauses.

I suppose, beyond the low clouds and the snowfields,  
 lie the marks of the trenches where forty years ago we dug  
 and we found them, found  
 the Ice Age long-horned bison,  
 the deadly point buried still  
 in the massive vertebra.

We proved something;  
 they write about it in books now  
 but that lost doorway of snow  
 through which the hunters were enticed to venture  
 will eventually  
 close behind us also.

Staring north through the falling flakes,  
 the hills invisible,  
 I think just once of the moment  
 when the fluted chalcedony  
 dropped into my hand  
 but really  
 I know now  
 it should never have been resurrected  
 any more than these wheels and wings and electronic voices  
 should ever again be lifted  
 from oblivion.

I hope they do not find us:  
 the point should remain in the vertebra,  
 the offering by the dead child in the cave,  
 the pterodactyl in the slate,  
 the poet in the lost book,  
 the singer as song in the grass.

Why must we usurp  
 the autumn leaf's prerogative  
 or the cancellations of running water  
 or the erasures of the dust?

Like the hunters, we will leave deadly slivers of glass  
 where they left flint,  
 the metal will oxidize.

We will be dangerous if found  
 by anything wiser  
 than a field mouse.

I hope he will take it upon himself to betray no secrets  
 nor resurrect even  
 that little artifact  
 the mousetrap  
 lest it be

disastrously reactivated.  
 It would take a glacier to pulverize us completely to chalk dust,  
 but even at Lindenmeier  
 the hunters had the grace to tiptoe  
 away with the last mammoth.

We never found them,  
 only their flints.

So be it forever  
 with us  
 and all those who come after.  
 Amen.