

JOHN LAMBERSKY  
**HANDWRITING**

You can tell a lover by her handwriting  
by her gentle inky curves  
by the stern punctuation  
by the round ovals of the p's and q's  
and all the spaces in between.

It is more revealing than any journal,  
this scrap heap of paper,  
these shopping lists and scattered notes  
piled up like layers of rock  
like glacial ice or rings of a tree.

This is the memory of a relationship,  
the quiet primary sources gathered over the years,  
of all the unconscious gripes and celebrations,  
of the disappointments and banality  
of that story, still being written, with each note  
and each caress.

## THAT DECEMBER

As strange as it seems now, I have never  
really thanked you—not properly, at least,

for that first December—for the way the flakes fell  
on your fine brown hair, and your grey wool coat,  
two sizes too big, as we walked down the street,  
elbows occasionally touching  
for the way I wasn't cold on the long walk  
home with you, and my hands, ungloved and red,  
didn't hurt at all, even though I was carrying  
that plastic grocery bag and it cut into  
my hands "something terrible," you said.

The next time you go under the bridge in the valley,  
notice the glow of the lights above. Every December  
they look the same as the first time I met you,  
and I wanted you to know.