

Three

A hiss, a woosh, a whisper:
to tickle the skin of the self,
to freeze the snot of the sniffer,

to chap lips. To understand
that eventually all summers turn winter
and all children turn old

and all students turn workers,
doomed to scream and shout
and beg for their lives

for their livelihoods
for their souls. Many are condemned
to touch cold, stubborn steel,

to walk on frozen, lonely linoleum,
to hold the once-warm bodies of their pasts
and weep.