

Three Poems

by [Paul Illidge](#) (February 2025)



Winters Walk (Louise Abbéma)

Snow Woman

*She studies the snow that is
Cupped in my bare hands
Then closes them with her own
Saying: Keep this for me
Until it has melted,
Snow is not snow until it melts.
I want to remember the snow
The way you hold it,
For when, as now, you are part
Of what melts, I can briefly touch
Things that have lost their warmth.
The melting means so much to me.
It promises something which
Only the cold understands.*

Presto

While you conjured spells,
I practised sleight of hand.
A giraffe played the piano.
A lion served tea.

Women at the table beside ours
Gushed about Harry Houdini.
A priest appearing out of nowhere
streaked past with fire in his hair.

I in my black tuxedo and tails,
You in top hat with a silver-tipped wand,
We stood and bowed to the curious crowd,
Moving hand in hand for the door.

No white rabbits up our sleeves,
We shouted together Abracadabra!
And like poets pulling hats out of

Magic words, Poof! we disappeared.

A Farmer Thinks

Like goats' chins,
Clouds rub the bare nose
Of the sunned sky
Over a milked city
Hung with fat buildings
That dangle between legs
Bulging above upside down
Faces, sweated faces.

There in the hay
Of the hot barn streets
Beef-red, thick-hoofed
Pasture people walk,
Dreamed awake but still weary
From a night standing in stalls.

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Paul Illidge's true crime memoir *RSKY BZNS* (New English Review Press, 2022), is a "fascinating story" (Frank Abagnale, Jr., author of *Catch Me if You Can*), a "gripping and intricate read" (Conrad Black). His memoir *THE BLEAKS* (ECW Press), was a *Globe & Mail Canada* Best Book of 2014. His new book *THE COYOTE TABERNACLE CHOIR* is a collection of 17 creative nonfiction stories. His modern prose versions of Shakespeare's seven greatest plays, *The Shakespeare Novels: Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Twelfth Night, Midsummer Night's Dream,*

Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, are all available internationally at www.kobobooks.com

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