

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **Our Friends from Sweden**

By William Doreski

Simplified by violet snow  
hillsides arch around the village,  
critiquing our modest world.  
Our friends have arrived from Sweden  
to teach us good winter manners.  
We in turn teach them coffee drinking

in the café where roughly sketched  
citizens cluster for warmth and chat.  
The day polishes itself gleaming.  
Snow-blind drivers dent each other  
in front of the post office where  
legal disputes are common.

Our friends speak perfect English  
but exclaim in lilting Swedish,  
their faces clenched like asteroids.  
How did we meet them? A dream  
of travel to rickety windscapes  
filmed in grainy black and white.

War had shucked over this terrain  
and left burnt-out tanks and trucks  
and a few unburied bodies.  
The film clattered through an old  
and misaligned projector. Shapes  
came and went. Two women arose

from the cellar of a smashed house  
and shook their fists at the camera crew.  
We couldn't distinguish dream from film  
but we asked these women to step  
into a third dimension and join us  
in equally vague America.

The village tries to embrace them.  
They may not be as real as us  
but they retain that monochrome  
of serious purpose even  
when they laugh us back to our senses  
and instruct us to ignore the cold.