

IF I HAVE LIVED

—for Scott and Julie, 06/26 and 07/17 2010 *

Snowflakes sauntered the city last January
like fictions, each apart, dearly eagling
home like nouns glistening with stubbornly
proud nor'easter manners—specific, darling—
with the clumsy spills of learning to swim
in an Ohio pool or Long Island Bay.
North Carolina, they'd have been religions,
elsewhere, travel's suitcases, which remain,
like Alexandrian quartets of time and space,

the invisible cities where I've loved you:—
Where leaning against walls we talk, assuaged,
then in a light rain sprint Fourth Avenue,
where we sandboard down a dune's subterfuge
and wonder, *What without you is the voyage?*
Funny how each has its President Street, how
like twins we always speak the same language,
how your photographs are good, mine dour,
and in each the hour's architecture is ours.

That snow stormed over me with the future,
and today's light—June or July—is the same:
You are my life, my continent, my weather,
my Machu Picchu, and half of my name.
If I have lived, I've lived to be here today
to hear birds in full-throated ease choring
our history's song with unabashed acclaim,
to hear them again tomorrow, still singing,
However I've lived, you are my only beginning.

* Christopher Louvet