



Dean Rader

### Paul Klee's *Winter Journey at the End of Summer*

*What's gone and what's past help should be past grief.*  
—*The Winter's Tale*

No place the road leads is where it goes. Clouds and the caravans of insects in motion across the quiet know this and press on. Distance is the

invention of those intent on arrival; neither product nor process of land or impression. What you leave behind may or may not be what you

return for, your journey an unbelievable course that led you through the remote and the crushed, passed shoulder-slag and body-drop, around

the stretched and sprawled where you find yourself in front of a painting, itself an imagined map of your own life, once again in winter,

as life always is, as is always the place you hope to move out of. Reader, it is you I think about now that you have arrived. We began so

long ago, you and I, from such different places, our seasons always the opposite of each other: yours leaning against spring and mine

tilting toward autumn, yet we wear the same coat. Here, let me fix the top button. I'll pull up the collar. Snow is beginning to fall,

and we have a long way to go. In the left pocket, you'll find a compass. It is not this poem, which is about to end, unlike you, despite the fact

you now find yourself in front of a tombstone fixed in a graveyard you do not know. The sky has put itself on ice, the lone tree

a chalice-spike of ash. Reader, I want to apologize for bringing you here. I know you thought we were headed someplace else.

I confess that I did as well. Grief is a snow squall. It blinds but it too moves along. Do not be angry. I have left you the coat.