

ARCTIC HEGIRA

On the first run through
there's no hint, none
of the crimp
so free a disturbance
of air might bear. But
by the fifth repeat
silences freeze
the loop shut, there
is nervous experimentation
with starting, so, slow,
or moving on, too fast, as if
one could hex change
out of the scheme.
In time, a beat, one gives in.
If it really has to be done
then it might as well be done
well; what needs to be done
may be accomplished
with style, even verve. To crimp is to gash
the flesh of a fish, to make it crisp
when cooked. To be crimped
is to feel those gashes, to think oneself
into the knife, the skin, the pattern so
random, so imposed.
In time, one's own, one
breaks,
free. What
was soundly bound
shatters, all jag now,
shrapnel, in hap-
hazard, dissonant flight
to far corners of meaning, and
because, simply
because
that can't last, a
coming together, in the sound
one's breath makes in the arctic,
as ice crystals form,
and fall, in
tinkling
accord.