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## To Be Safe

Jason Snart  
*College of DuPage*

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Ross LaSalle. *Make Some Noise!* Photograph

To Be Safe

Jason Snart

*Vita hominis est militia super terram*

Job 7:1

I am meeting a friend  
at *The Great Wall*  
for fried wontons, west of the Ethiopian place  
below the fur shop

I've known him since school  
he read palms at parties  
predicting sex and fortune  
in pools of sweat  
then offering  
a drunken kiss on the hand  
in hopes for his own  
good fortune

He loves to do Tarot cards  
for his grandmother

who doesn't go out much anymore  
afraid of slipping  
as her late-husband had  
just before last Christmas

He takes  
the *Morte* out  
to be safe  
though doesn't care  
to store the cards  
above heart level

\*

Getting to the Wall  
is an icy minuet  
after sunset in January  
roads reflecting  
black sheets  
in frozen headlight puddles

An assumed background  
music of dainty  
pizzicato strings  
waltzing in 3 / 4  
as cars twist and swim  
in elegant, ineluctable choreography

\*

At *The Great Wall*  
they offer tea  
but no one reads the leaves  
my friend admits  
he knows no more about tea  
than sweat in the palm, these signs  
are meaningless

Drink them, says the waitress,  
good for you.