Why I hate to be up in the air, 
dangling in a car on a wire strung between two alps 
above the village of Chamonix, 
is not that much of a puzzle. 
I’m afraid the thread will snap, we’ll drop 
and smash apart like a music box— 
the one I had when I was four, with its painted lid, 
a snowy glacier winding around a tiny Swiss chalet 
as if to tuck it in. When I lifted the lid, 
the whirring butterfly gears played a muted song 
I thought of as Joy to the World (not the Christmas tune) 
because those words made me want to cry, 
lying under the covers in late afternoon, 
watching the honeyed light brim up in the globes of my eyes 
so they wouldn’t see sleep coming out of the mountains. 
A woman swallows and clenches the handrail 
but does this quietly, to herself, as if her fear 
were something small and tightly wound 
and she wouldn’t want it played to the other two of us. 
As for myself, I concentrate on looking out, not down, 
as if we were thousands of miles from earth, 
as if this deep into space we have left behind even nostalgia. 
As if is the motor that hums and carries us 
from the lower peak to the higher 
in forty thousand hammering breaths, 
and all our reasons—Bill’s, the woman’s, mine—for braving this height 
shape into tremendous peaks on the other side of the valley, 
and, highest of all, Mont Blanc— 
what a friend pronounces Mount Blank and we always laugh, 
but what I see now is tremendously blank, 
what burns in my eyes when I look at something that white, 
what chafes my sweaty palms when I think of anything that high. 

Just for an instant I feel it, the white, taking everything back, 
even words: nothing’s been said or ever will be. 
Like pages of memory, language is waiting 
for something to happen, the slightest change on the slopes 
or in the clouds shaping over them. 
Then the light backs off, or maybe my eyes adjust 
and words streak over our silences 
like the fissures we see carved into glacial ice 
that, deep underneath, is Windex-blue. 
But all along I hated the thought of having to ride back
I think that is part of the dread:
some of the whiteness rides down too, like a paper cut.
We have the swaying car to ourselves this time
and so I can't help it, I let go and cry.
And the woman who doesn't ride down with us,
maybe she wants to be alone on the wobbly *teleferique*,
holding her body as rigid inside her clothes
as the gods in their marble skin on the grounds of Versailles,
or the dog I see a few days later in a still life by Chardin,
poised on the verge of upsetting the polished fruit.
Later, in Paris, that woman seems almost a part of history:
Marie Antoinette wandering inside her tiny 18th century
prisonyard of remaining life, stroking the edge of a grassblade,
the way we tease ourselves with the future;
the Mona Lisa, whose skin has a radioactive glow . . .
we spend one afternoon among pendulous roses grown for a royal party,
the little nothings trained into trees of perfumed breath
we breathe as we walk up and down the rows,
having driven here through the moving parking lots of Paris
where at least we are close to the ground.
On the flight home, dosed with Xanax, I miss the northern lights
or almost miss them, lifting my heavy head
to blow a vaporous rose on the little window
that blanks out forever the ravening flickers of green.
Then sleep snows me over and I'm not there or even here
in the empty universe that, after Mont Blanc,
can't think of anything else to invent but death.
FICTION

INTERVIEW

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Nancy Eimers
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Christopher Merrill
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**SUGGESTED READING**

Feminize Your Canon: Isabelle Eberhardt
By Emma Garman  February 11, 2019
K ...

David McCullough, The Art of Biography No. 2
By David McCullough
" ...

**THE DAILY**
**FEMINIZE YOUR CANON**

**NEWSLETTER**

**FROM THE ARCHIVE, ISSUE 152**
**INTERVIEW**
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<td>Join the writers and staff of <em>The Paris Review</em> at our next event.</td>
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<td>Visit our store to buy archival issues of the magazine, prints, T-shirts, and accessories.</td>
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[Verse 1] Joy to the world, the Lord has come Let earth receive her King Let every heart prepare Him room And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

[Verse 2] Joy to the world, the Savior reigns Let men their songs employ While fields and fords, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.