Pantoum

by John Ashbery

Eyes shining without mystery,

Footprints eager for the past

Through the vague snow of many clay pipes,

And what is in store?

Footprints eager for the past

The usual obtuse blanket.

And what is in store

For those dearest to the king?

The usual obtuse blanket.

Of legless regrets and amplifications

For those dearest to the king.

Yes, sirs, connoisseurs of oblivion,

The usual obtuse blanket.

Of legless regrets and amplifications

For those dearest to the king.

Yes, sirs, connoisseurs of oblivion,

Of legless regrets and amplifications,

That is why a watchdog is shy.

Yes, sirs, connoisseurs of oblivion,

These days are short, brittle; there is only one night.

That is why a watchdog is shy,

Why the court, trapped in a silver storm, is dying.

These days are short, brittle; there is only one night

And that soon gotten over.

Why the court, trapped in a silver storm, is dying

Some blunt pretense to safety we have

And that soon gotten over

For they must have motion.

Some blunt pretense to safety we have

Eyes shining without mystery,

For they must have motion

Through the vague snow of many clay pipes.