Amorphous thing, the snow, the way it stands
In admonition, melting with our lands
A little at a time so no one knows
That ever passing days have changed the snows
From soft and downy things to blue-steel ice.
Jagged and crystal now, the hard device
Of rhythmic time is the snow’s transposing stare.
Moist at the edge like a tear, the snows lie bare
And changed with liquid drops of blood that none
Remember melting, or trickling down the one
Lone dolmen stone still standing on the dark
And naked plain where gods lie dead. There stark
Reality admits no way of life
For snow and ice and men but death. The strife
Of having been they must contain or be
Contained in one last final breath, not free—
As they thought they might be free someday—but done
With measuring time by changing state. Just One,
Old age perhaps has set on him, remains:
His mutant, multi-godded image stains
The past. The earth, his solemn omnibus,
Refracts the light in colors ominous
And gray. While his diurnal page demands
A rightful due from ice and men, their hands,
Angle on angle, rifle to the sky,
A peaceful black. And only ice knows why
The ancient gods lived there, not you and I.

Mr. Parsons’s “Genesis on Ice” contains strong evocative images with its
description of the changing states of ice. The poem is well crafted and quite
cohesive, presenting a strong, effective statement on ice in its relation to the
rest of nature and to the life of man.—R.E.W.