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## Naming the Wildflowers

Gregory Djanikian

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## Winter, 1977: Messages from Upstate N.Y. to a Friend

*For Michael Clemens*

January: thirty  
below and I want

to be able to say that I'm  
not worried that the cold

gets easier to bear that  
these huge and anonymous

drifts by the road are less real  
than my house what it holds

lamp chair book cup  
me by this window just now

blue spruce on the hill  
disappeared in a mist of snow

became cloud and I wonder  
what's next even the dogs won't

go out but sleep where  
I can see them it's this

maniacal whiteness smooth  
and unblemished there's nothing

it won't uncolor so  
here I am falling

in love with what's rough  
or imperfect this remarkable dent

in my stove the oak floor  
I stand on repeating what's written

in day-glo green  
on my postbox side: *Djanikian*

*RD 1.* Proof enough  
I'm still holding my ground.

— *Gregory Djanikian*

## Naming the Wildflowers

*For Carol and Ken*

Ineptly we've been at it,  
the three of us,

miscounting leaves and sepals,  
mixing up stems,

but somehow we've come through  
with the right names:

fleabane, hawkweed, bedstraw,  
and blue-eyed grass—

those marvelous words  
that Adam must have mouthed,

stilling each petal  
as he spoke; or if not

Adam, then some old farmer  
suddenly turned poet

describing to his wife  
what he'd just unearthed

by his own garden. Now  
*we've* discovered them,

and come next summer, sure  
and smooth-voiced with a winter's

worth of singing, we'll  
pass them on to others

so they, too, might know  
what we exist among.

It's a vow we'll make good  
later. Today, we're stumbling

on new ground, full-throated,  
too alive with each name!

— *Gregory Djanikian*