

# They are hostile nations

By Margaret Atwood

i

In view of the fading animals  
the proliferation of sewers and fears  
the sea clogging, the air  
nearing extinction

we should be kind, we should  
take warning, we should forgive each other

Instead we are opposite, we  
touch as though attacking,

the gifts we bring  
even in good faith maybe  
warp in our hands to  
implements, to manoeuvres

ii

Put down the target of me  
you guard inside your binoculars,  
in turn I will surrender

this aerial photograph  
(your vulnerable  
sections marked in red)  
I have found so useful

See, we are alone in  
the dormant field, the snow  
that cannot be eaten or captured

iii

Here there are no armies  
here there is no money

It is cold and getting colder,

We need each others'  
breathing, warmth, surviving  
is the only war  
we can afford, stay

walking with me, there is almost  
time / if we can only  
make it as far as

the (possibly) last summer

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