Sunday Afternoon Palindrome

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SUNDAY AFTERNOON PALINDROME

They buy frozen orange juice, bread, eggs, then leave
Counting their change. Small brown sack balanced
Against her hip, she lags yards behind his shadow.
Keys and coins peal deep in his trenchcoat pockets,
Khaki cloth resurrected on this day of ransacked trees.
He lopes to the car, coat tails snapping and talking back
At the wind—almost a loft, the lift of canvas wings . . .
Winter mornings, her students giddy from forecasts of snow,
She would show their favorite movies, Pioneers of Flight,
Path to Kitty Hawk: Animated bird-men leaping off blind
Cliffs and campaniles, courageous monks left blind,
Maimed, because their feathered limbs failed to echo flight.
How the children cheered as the credits rolled into snow,
Anticipating the projector's gift of reversal, splintered wings
Instantly whole could soar the crumpled adventurers back
To departure, their apparatus upswept from ravines and trees . . .
Last night the clocks turned back, cramming winter's pockets
Full with light. This is her dreaded season, long shadows
In the den by noon tipping the house off-balance,
Her garden dim and inverted, the gutters clotting with leaves.

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