

LOW DETECTION

Imprisoned by thrown-open doors and windows, you wait. Who passes by, who doesn't notice you, who never notices you or ever comes for you, is a much larger part of your life than you theirs.

Venturing out on occasion, you fear tiny rainbow prints on new fallen snow will lead you underground between two overlapping roots that were once the legs your mother at the last moment crossed before carrying you full-term to birth, and yet, you've never had such problems following these same rainbows in the dark where snow's melted into one calm winter streambed after another.

Every time you return, you ask for silence and its unspoken promise of solitude. Lightbulbs tightened into place yet loosened by the human vibrations spiderwebs cushion, burst with so much light that there's no space outside your own body in which you've ever been seen.

In the future, you'll take your darkness elsewhere.

MIDNIGHT BLUE

After snowy headlights blotch the hotel lobby's ignored fika, fern and spider plant shadows and its elevator goes up before coming down, noise filled streets are muffled by slush swirling round the mushy hubs of the warm bus ride home at whose last stop you forgot to get off.

Since sight itself's become a sort of blindness, when let off, you walk as far and as fast as you can without once looking where you're going. So embarrassed are you for missing what you never had.

Late that night you're discovered where an aqua tint of snow around your head sunk in a snowbank's deep footprint resembles the halo your long walk home had you hoping you would find.

END COMPANY

Nearby deer kneel in a dream of snow, their chins dripping with the long drinks they've taken from one of winter's hidden streams.

Allowing them to speak startles and stumbles you over snow-topped rocks beside a chest-deep water surprisingly not wet yet perfectly clear to its bottom where without so much as a ripple you slide in unseen.

As cold as it is with nowhere else to go while running out of breath, icicles appear as brittle syllables budding the end of your exhausted tongue.

You must be this quiet to listen.

STARS ALONE

Posted to the night, invaluable stars you peel one after another off the sky palletize their flat selves in warehouses protected by acid filled canals and electrified fences barbed with charred incisors screened from the ashes of way too many unloved dogs.

Any faint star's quickly discarded before oxygen pits its fleeing existence and grinds its fragile light into dust. The few that do remain, dying so their lives become conjecture instead of action, continue to lose their memory one light year at a time.

Searching the sky, you're cold enough to feel the warmth of such distant light, knowing somehow the stars that are no more, the stars that darken inside these warehouses, and appear much like your aloneness, collapse into the disarray of their still warm ashes.

THE AWAITED

Night is yours when all other breathing sleeps. Music a distant owl hoots, a whippoorwill whinnies, icicles drip, and winds shake from spruce branches with loose clumps of fresh snow, all deepen the rhythm of silence within your aloneness.

Rising, a waning crescent moon shivers its distinct brilliance from the coldest of wide open skies. How its blinding light, diminished by your squinting eyes into a thimbleful still signals crocuses to push their fragile heads up as yellow scouts above the earth's thawing blue surface.

Sudden music crests over and wavers a tea candle's flame where standing at the window you wait for what never returns without ever knowing no roads lead back to you.

OUT HERE

Owasco's shore reaches so far out this winter that only crystallized webs of hollow ice where shallow water used to be stretch their bubble-filled and brittle-thin bodies between black and sulfur colored rock. The crunching echo of your footsteps instead of fins against the sides of these rocks sounds awkward.

Perched on your shoulder, wind whispering in your ear the same notes you once heard a white throated sparrow call to its mate in western Maine convinces you the one you await has returned even though you're not the kind of person who'd necessarily notice shadows on snow without apparent sunlight. Eventually you accept how no one's returned and how you suffer the words used to understand it.

Grown older than you remember, you prick yourself and the little that's left of your blood spilling into gutters down the hilly roads of your childhood dissolves in a clear glass of water on the nightstand along with what were once your grandfather's false teeth. But now they're your teeth and your lips without speaking quiver the way a knife hits its target at the thought.

You keep to yourself, your blood lullabied to sleep by the silence.