

Desert Snow

Lillian G Lippold

The first snow happens quietly, midnight on a Sunday. It tells no one its whereabouts, and before it shows itself, we wait with the frustration of bored soldiers, premature coats and scarves. With the snow, we stand, crouched before the windows, somehow wide-awake again. He chews Trident peppermint gum, and we are there together, before the window, the window that always still lets the chill in, and we feel awake even in these pitch dark winter days. When the snow falls, first, the first in a long time, the first since before the seasons of salt and sweat and wind, I all of a sudden have found enough courage for my solstice gifts, enough favors left buried at the bottom of my traveler's backpack to cash in. Even in the cold light, with the disjoint, with the whirlwind-messy room, I'm leaning over the windowsill to see the snow in the light of the corner bar, the one the karaoke screams come from, the one I'd probably forget if I still even could.

Time passes. As it does.

And when the second snow comes, I don't notice it. The minute is the same as the last. The colors are steady, and I am doing no harm at all. It begins early, past the alarm, darkened and unrested in a bedroom that isn't mine. Itchy. The second snow, and then the third, startles me, us. I'm in the desert. I'm not surprised anymore. In a different state, I am thinking about this on a new morning as we drive to the trail. I am cold in this other morning, snow to distract me. I'm thinking how it is that one's day can begin with kissing the back of another boy and then end without him? How it is that I can live without, silly things, I'm distracted by. There is the first snow and then there I am otherwise. There I am, the new year before me, snow in the desert, sitting on a cliff face in complete vacuumed silence, something that has never occurred in my life up to this point, me, sitting on a cliffside, eating a whole avocado with a spoon.