

## Here but Elsewhere

Already sick, I waited for the doctor. Two months later the appointment was canceled

as storm prevented flights into Atqasuk.  
We build us alone. The solitary fox empties

the house of its many things. Days count  
pills to pollute their bodies like ice warms

to its desires. Quiet deaths, these glaciers.  
All the erratics, a kettle lake warms to boil.



Sedge edges the village, spreads. *Dominant*

brings to mind curved landscapes—a city  
against the foothills, ocean to shore—even

tundra where tussocks seek enough height

to flower. Even with that there are eyes  
reaching. This landscape appears beyond

human shape. Even without that, names  
mapped it, those eyes running horizons.

-40 degrees—to touch each other is arrival.

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Thirty-third spring. Painted tundra fills  
the time. It looks like a scene we might find

in the open room beyond this room, far past  
ourselves—a parade of caribou eyes aimed.

## Radiation Hotel

Part plastic guest  
room. Part stunned body, skeletal

in the window, your mind—heat  
funnels the body, ripples through.

Part of it too bruised  
and empty around your stomach  
to remove

the memory of your torso being dug  
out, its impermanence  
like a flower

bed—weeds and rodents threaten  
to tell a story, begin overtaking.

Who is that story on its knees? That  
part about the body

red as evening sky  
above what you didn't believe.

What you didn't believe could  
tunnel into you. That it already had.

Part climax. Part end.

## Heat Genesis

The purged caribou heart. The first arctic meal prepared raw before fire. Before fires

purpled meat, meat was ulued off to serve an open mouth. The first heart's crevasses

stretched like caribou cut raw. Proto-heart raw in search of fire, red windburn revealed

the body. That blood wanting of new heat lived in the body raw. Open arctic, the first

blood transfusion was what caribou purged fed into veins as freeze threatened the heart.

## On Ice

1.

I've read ice referred to as earth's air conditioner. We sleep as it forms, expands, melts—a simple process, as simple

as holding each other through night. The steps are exactly the same for letting go of each other in the morning.

Swelling comes from being a world to yourself for too long.

2.

The skirring in the sky moves across the tundra. Across Browerville's territory, shore is near white and fuels

what the rest of us feel—the ice rolls outward for maybe the last few years that it will.

3.

At three my son palmed a burner red with heat. I pressed ice against him and with freeze to his skin he knew

to go cold when hurting. He learned what to want for pain. *I'm going to jump in the lava*, my son says. We are playing

in the backyard. He edges a hole our dog has emptied into shape for years. Always the way it works, we remove

what makes us whole. He wants to be burned, he tells me,  
*and you can't save me.* I act my own play-along scream

to the sky. He stops and says he will be okay. *Don't worry.*  
*I promise it will be okay.* He jumps and I don't save him.

4.

Faces retain what the world gives back to us. We see it  
in the mirror. Because it is already done, the mirror reflects

small ways we reduce. Like ice rolled over mistakes,  
we grieve what we touch, the selves we try to change too late.

Sometimes we are awakened in time to know it. I once fell  
through arctic ice hiding in a game of sardines. Broke

the surface and then almost drowned. I still miss the feeling  
right after, the body's knowledge of almost dying but not.

5.

What I want is for my sons to survive long enough to see  
what we each become, and to hold it until I break apart.

I want to write on ice. Enough to fall through it. Enough  
to break the present moment backward. To numb

enough of the body to the point where I don't feel myself holding me, that these arms might be someone else's arms

pulling me back up. Listen, most days we need to empty the house of our ten thousand things. This harming warm

we splay for, these places we create, it all needs an ice bath after the damage done here, needs a cry in cryotherapy.

6.

All the tears, translations we freeze for the future hurting.