

Authors on 8th:

Jessie's Room

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Prose submission to Authors
on Eighth 2019

I left the window open in Jesse's room. Not wide and not on purpose. but because I hate stale air, even in all this snow. It always annoyed Jesse, finding the window cracked open when a snow storm was starting, how quickly the house would cool. But I just can't stand the smell, that old dead taste of it sitting in the back of my throat. So when I got home from the camping trip I opened the window a crack in Jesse's room, because it still smelled too much like him. And this would have been fine except that it's thirty below and now the window is frozen open.

I touch the ice, the smoothness of it stings my fingers and warps the world outside, not that much can be seen. The ice bubbles outward and I can see blurs of brown where the trees meet the edge of the house, dead like everything else right now. Other than the blur of branches it's white, a bland and blinding thing that illuminates the house even when the lights are off.

It's cold enough to see my breath in Jesse's room, cold enough for my skin to prickle, for me to wish I had worn socks, for the starts of a shiver. I don't spend long in here, just a few minutes of trying and failing to close the open window shut, and a few moments longer than I'd like staring at his unmade bed wondering if the mess was from him or me.

When I leave I keep the door open. Jesse's room is the only one that has fresh air now, and though I hate the cold I love the smell of it. How it stings and cleans, my small bit of freshness in this house.

Like everything in winter the city dies too. It's the cold that does it, the snow. Not that the city is big anyhow, with a population of just over fourteen hundred it's a generous word.

Jesse fell in love with this place when he took me to do the Sour Toe Cocktail with him on our second anniversary. Having a dead toe

brush against my lip wasn't my idea of romance but Jesse liked surprises, and he never failed to surprise me. It was on that trip where we both saw the Northern Lights for the first time, a red and blue dance in the sky that we couldn't take our eyes off of. It was Jesse who said we should move here, Jesse who loved Dawson, and it's not that I don't love it, only that it's harder without him, especially in the cold, in the snow.

You see, we came here during tourist season. We saw it when it was fun, when you could gamble, when the sun always seemed to be shining, when the city was alive. I don't know what I thought the winters would be like but I didn't know most of the stores would close, that few if any people actually ventured outside. I didn't know how lonely it would be, even with Jesse.

But Jesse loved the winter here, he saw it as another surprise and I think he liked to imagine himself as one of those old explorers. He bought us both snowshoes during our first snowfall; he even started taking a dogsledding course. And then he got it in his head that we should go camping in the snow. Not far he said, just a little ways into the hills by our house. He bought the tent, food, water, thick sleeping bags and coats so that we could rough it like the explorers did. But Jesse was bad at directions and it was far. And now he's gone, and I'm still here in this house, in this cold. But at least the house is losing his smell.

Maybe it's the house, or the snow, or maybe it's because Jesse isn't here, but I don't have much energy to do anything. If the city feels like it should close up with the weather then I do too. I've never felt a cold like this, a cold that attacks and kills the moment you step out the door. I haven't taken off the thick parka Jesse bought me since I got home from the trip. It keeps me warm, makes me sweat even, but it isn't enough to convince me to leave the house.

It's not like I would die in here anyways. I have enough food, and if I have to go outside there's a corner store three minutes away. I think it's still open, when I came home I could make out its yellow sign



in the snow. I don't eat much anyways, haven't eaten much since Jesse.

I go back to my room, blinds down and dark, a rim of white lights itself around the window like something blessed or cursed, something that wants to be opened. I stand there and the staleness of my room crawls through my nose down my throat and gags me. But it doesn't smell like Jesse in here and it's warmer so I stumble to the darkness and mess of my bed and hide myself away, under the covers so that even the white square of light is invisible to me. I imagine myself as some lumbering sleeping creature, hibernating from the cold. It's a boring and addictive hobby; I can't remember the last time I showered. I don't have to worry about the pipes freezing, not with the copper wires keeping them thawed, but the bathroom tiles are as cold and white as the snow piling up outside my door, as the snow dusting itself into Jesse's room. I'd rather smell and be warm than deal with this storm.

I don't even know if I sleep anymore, not when I keep everything so dark, not when I rarely dream. I know I do sometimes because at times I feel Jesse beside me on the bed again, sometimes I can smell him. And that's when I wake up and go to his room.

Something startles me from a sleep as dark and dreamless as the house. It's something that echoes, something familiar that lingers. It's a name dying in the air, the only sound in the house. I open my eyes and sit up in the darkness of the room and the white light glowing around the window's edge is dimmer now that it's dark. The red numbered clock beside me is dead, and a chill has crept its way into the house. The power's out. Even without the clock I can tell from how quiet the house is, all those little buzzes of clocks and radios and T.V.'s that we ignore are dead and seem to scream in it. The power is out which means the heat is off, and the window in Jesse's room is still open.

I wander over to the room, wrapping my comforter around me as it drags along like a cloak, my hand resting against the wall. It's freezing in here, the smell of the cold stings my nostrils and the blind rattles against the window. I raise it and the blast of air from the storm hurts my skin. The ice on the window is worse now, thicker. Even if I tried I couldn't get the window closed. I peek out at the cracked open area through the screen, towards the hills and trees that creep towards the house. It's where the sound dies, some name that screams at me from the wind.

My name and with it, a shape.

It's the dark time of year now, even the sun pretends

to die in Dawson in winter. The snow acts as our only light and in the snow I see that shape, that smear outside the house, a flickering smudge that I can't make out. I can't see eyes or anything that would tell me what it is but I know that my name comes from it, that it's watching me. And the smear fills me with that stale feeling. It puts pressure on me, makes me want to vomit, makes me want to leave the house and chase it away. And I can't explain it, but I know that's what it wants me to do.

I haven't been outside since Jesse and I went camping.

I walk out of Jesse's room quickly, stumbling on my

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For Sale

Two Commercial Agriculture Lots

The Agriculture Branch is currently offering two six-hectare soil based agriculture lots on Pioneer Lane in the Ibex Valley (near kilometre 1454 on the Alaska Highway).

These parcels are part of a planned agriculture land release. The parcels will be sold using an evaluative process.

Prospective purchasers are required to submit a detailed farm development business plan as part of their project plan.

Project plans will be evaluated with an offer of sale to the applicant that demonstrates the clearest understanding of developing a sustainable commercial farming enterprise.

Deadline for applications is January 21, 2020 at 4:30 pm.

Applications returned by mail must be postmarked by this date.

Application packages outlining eligibility criteria and requirements are available online at yukon.ca/apply-agriculture-land or from:

Government of Yukon, Agriculture Branch
Suite 320A, 300 Main Street
Whitehorse, Yukon

For more information, please visit yukon.ca or phone 1-800-661-0408 ext. 3022.

Yukon

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comforter and I close the door fresh air be damned. I get my phone from my room and use the flashlight to find my way to the living room. It's slightly warmer than upstairs; I can hopefully retain some heat in the house now that Jesse's room is closed. I don't know how long power outages last here, how long I'll be cold. No matter how cold I am in here though I know it will be warmer than out there, where Jesse is.

When I go to close the blinds of the living room I'm surprised by how high the snow is. A quick glance on

the lawn shows that it's at least up to my knees, I wonder how much more snow we'll get. The wind makes the house groan and creak, makes it scream and suffer all around me.

I gather all the blankets in the house except for the ones in Jesse's room and bury myself in them while the house protects me in its torture from the storm. I tell myself that it will stop soon, that my shivering will end, that when I wake up the heat will be on and I'll be able to close the window in Jesse's room. I should be happy I don't have to be out in

the cold like Jesse.

And I'm trying but it feels like I don't exist right now. In this darkness, in this storm, where the wind keeps calling for me and I swear that smear has shadowed the living room window for the past hour, if it's even been an hour, however long it's been.

Someone knocks on the door three times. They're quick knocks, three at a time like some sort of waltz. Each knock grips my heart and I stand staring at the door. I grab the knob, as cold as the snow, and open it.

It's the only brightness I have now, this rectangle of white. It's a white that takes warmth, takes sight, takes life if you let it. The last time I saw white like this Jesse and I were camping and I remember being stunned by how blank and beautiful it was, how other colours popped from it. How blood looked so warm even when it was freezing and how tired and sad Jesse looked that last time.

And I can see that smear far outside the door, towards the hills not even close enough to have knocked. And though it doesn't move or speak I know it's pulling me towards it. How the wind leaks its way in and pulls at me, grabbing the blankets around me toward the door.

I'm just a step away from

the snow when I slam it shut, lock the door and run upstairs. I don't even think when I launch myself into Jesse's room, into the coldness of it, the wide open blinds and that wind. And I bury myself into his blankets, and imagine his arms around me and I'm sorry because I'm cold and I was cold and I just wanted to go home but we couldn't go home and it was so bare and so empty and white and how that white tried to kill me like it is now. And I say that I'm sorry over and over again while my skins aches and I wonder if I can get frost bite from an open window, if someone someday will find me dead in Jesse's room.

I wake up to colour and voices coming from the window of Jesse's room. Blue and red flashes against the ceiling and in my foggy sleepy state I think I'm with Jesse again and that we're seeing the Northern Lights for the first time. It's something that feels like a lifetime ago, a memory that feels made up.

Sweat clings coldly to my skin and as I follow the lights to the window I feel the heat from the register on my foot and look to the red numbered clock by Jesse's bed. I hear all those little sounds we ignore until they go out and know the power is back, and that it's just Jesse's room that

is cold now.

And I see the fallen tree outside my house, where the smear stood. The storm must have knocked it down from far up in the hills; it makes a crevice in the snow from where it was dragged knocking smaller trees down with it. There are more officers than I think is necessary for a fallen tree, some cluster around it and I see footprints of officers who must have gone deeper into the hills to see where it fell from, see how much damage it caused.

And then I see the stretcher. They have to carry it through the snow; it's not possible to wheel it in this weather. A black body bag on top, not flat like the filled ones you see on T.V. but lumpy and curled like whoever's inside has made himself small, tried to keep themselves warm during the storm.

I leave Jesse's room, closing the door this time and place a blanket against the crack of it. It's still too cold to close the window but at least it will only be cold in there.

I go back to my room, dark and safe and unfortunately stale but after a night of cold I welcome it. There's another knock at the door, different from last night and I ignore it. It's still too cold to go outside.

The **LITTLE BLUE DAYCARE** would like to say the biggest "Thank you" to The Government of the Yukon Community Development Fund for funding our Backyard Revamp at the Daycare!



We would also like to thank everyone who donated or dedicated time to help us achieve our project goals for the children and the future children in our care!

Volunteers – Scott deWindt, Courtney Jackson-Decelle, Brad Decelle, Chris Dalgarno, JT Taylor, John McDonald, Stephen and Kate deWindt, Lisa Perry, Dennis Dunn, Spruce Gerberding, Adam Fox, Rosaly Guimond, Erika Violette, Paul Adams, Camille Colas, Brittany and Brian Naef.

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Businesses – Play Systems North, Grenon Enterprises, TSL Contractors, Castle Rock Enterprises, Annie Lake Trucking, Sunnydale Landscaping, Gammie Trucking, Newmont Goldcorp, Arctic Inland Resources and JT Taylor.

Parcels for Seniors

November 19, 2019

Greetings from the IODE Dawson Chapter!

As we approach the holiday season, the IODE is preparing for one of our biggest initiatives of the year – Parcels for Seniors! Each year, the IODE raises money and puts out the call for baking so that every senior in Dawson City receives a gift at Christmas. We have dispersed donation tins to local businesses in, so if you see one and have some spare change, know that your donation helps make the holidays special for a senior in our community! We will also be putting out a call for baking so that everyone gets a little sweetness for the holidays too! If you would like to bake a couple dozen cookies to sweeten Christmas for a

senior, please drop them off on December 15th at McDonald Lodge between 4 – 6pm, or let us know and we can pick them up.

If you know a senior or are a senior and want to make sure you're on the list, please email Kyla (kylaofthenorth@gmail.com) or let her know through a member of the IODE! If you're a senior who would rather have a \$20 donation made to a local organization in lieu of receiving a gift, you can also let us know anytime.

Think you might like to join the IODE, add your name to our list of volunteers and bakers, or have any questions about what we do? Get in touch! From all of us at the IODE Dawson Chapter, have a wonderful holiday season Dawson!

