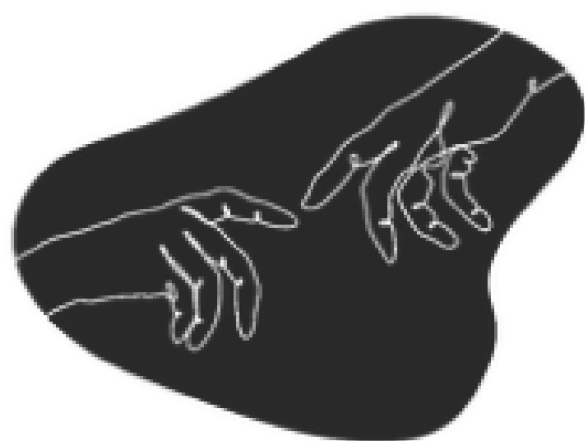




Thread Magazine

The Winter Edition

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“The First One to Leave”

by Sarah Nakano

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Ice Breaker

Samantha Whiskeyman

I went too far one day (couldn't feel my feet, or what was underneath). They said the ice broke so suddenly, no one could have known (I can remember my breath bubbling towards the sky). But one moment I was fine, the next I was in over my head (the weight of the water, holding me under). You nearly killed yourself dragging me towards land (you fought pneumonia, I turned out fine). I still haven't said thank you (to someone who wasn't meant to be a savior).



Misfortune Favors the Unaware

Samantha Whiskeyman

My Winter in the Military

Elias Renkonen

Amid the arctic air, battalions sat breathing in despair. Cigarettes and cigars, choking our lungs, for cancer could never catch up to our lives, soon ending us at barrels of guns. If every soldier is a star, why are we still treated as spare parts? We lie in wait for a platoon that on some soon day will roll through and destroy us. If I ever get out, I'm hitting the town. Never frowning again, I'm going all out! Not shivering in snow but shoveling it up my nose and down my veins until I freeze to death in the bathroom stalls. Awaiting that day, all we pray for is fire, food, and nicotine, our essentials to survive. The storm of sergeants telling us to conform cannot reach us anymore, not before our breaths of smoke.



Snowcap

Samantha Whiskeyman



Ace of Cups

Zoey Lin

This is Patriotism

Aki Sakurada

In the Northern Italian Alps

December 13, 1916

Green murky uniforms, the officers say we cannot have any cowards amongst us, so men shoot their own, lined up against stone blood streaming, but not from mercy's bullet. Tuscan lips mutter, "Some soldier you are," to a body. The five silver stars on his arm meant nothing.

White frozen slush, it's snowing in the Alps. We are freezing to death on mountains, somehow it is the only neutral thing, killing without a flag. Those climbing are crushed by falling glaciers, their frostbitten hands cling to arms, rifles—the sole companions of dead soldiers. Sometimes, rifles are the only things hugging dead sons.

Red missing from mulberry bushes, the frost claiming flesh, fingers cinching the ribs, unsaturated skin never to be kissed again by their mother's lips. Some of our infantry are awarded the pleasure of boulders swallowing their tents while lost in some homesick dream.

Normally, fear fires first shot down like chamois deer, and not so far away lay our young troops, trembling in wet mud, trigger happy because they are so terrified.

For Honey

Nate Varnado

There was an old woman inside
a friend's house after sledding
It took me awhile to look at her
Our skin was cracked
Mine with careless
closeness to the fire
and blisters from snow boats
Hers with age and
coldness unlike that
that beat against a windbreaker

I had never felt coldness like that
The type that made you feel
like you were too dead for
the living and too living for
the dead
A ghost with all the realness of that one
cherished
Stuffed animal yellowed and holed
somewhere unearthed
for a moment then returned
to cardboard attic
basement tomb

From the attic
The woman handed me something
A small fan with dolphins said
her name was Honey
It smelled like how she did that day
Rose perfume and something fundamental

I could not place that base note when I as younger
It was the same scent that was in my dad's old
Military uniform. Mom's
sweet 16 dress

Her hands shifted as she handed it to me
It seemed as if her bones stayed still
alongside the fan as she pulled her soul
from storage

I was scared of her and
the smell that I knew yet
could not identify That I
did not like on a stranger

I did not stay with her

Years later I found the fan
when I moved for college It
was stuffed with childhood
keepsakes smelled like hair
chalk charm bracelet metal 90
Cent Bubblegum ChapStick his
jean jacket old photobooths
cigarette smoke my cologne
rose perfume acceptance

**Tobias**

Riley Sprout

Frosted Gold

Anna Alieva

There's no seasonal change in southern Spain, no such thing as 'fall' between scalding, dry summers and just slightly cooler winters. Early in October, it begins to rain as if nature attempts to compensate for five months of red-hot droughts and raging wildfires. Sometimes, the rain doesn't stop. Water rushes down streets with crushing force, sweeping up furniture, street signs, and cars as if they weigh nothing at all.

Winter here creeps in slowly, without much change or warning: a false season, marked by chilly evenings and clear skies at night. Festive garlands and baubles spring up in November, only to be taken down as soon as Christmas flies by.

I'm no stranger to the cold—the real kind. The one that creeps down your collar and makes your fingertips go numb even with gloves on. I spent my childhood drawing snow angels in the woods with my body, sledding at the park on the intersection of Leninskiy and Udaltsova, changing out of puffy winter coats in the school entryway, and shaking grey sludge from my boots. When we immigrate, it's startling that I no longer need to keep a change of shoes in my locker. It's December. By my standards, it should be freezing, but some of my classmates have never seen snow.

In the January before I turn thirteen, we drive to Burgos to pick up our first family dog. Deep into the ten-hour trip, the gloomy mountaintops that rise out of the fog are finally capped with white. I should be excited, seeing snow again. Instead I feel a sharp twinge of disappointment. It's so little. Compared to the sweeping blizzards of my childhood, this is hardly snow at all.

My breath puffs clouds in the air when we arrive at the dog breeder's house. Here and there in the massive yard, the grass beneath my feet is sprinkled with white. It melts when I come near, and all my boot kicks up is a sad little puddle. Add more about the dog and the snow. Any comparisons?

A flock of corgi puppies, short-legged and smaller than my forearm, swirls around my feet. It's enough to distract me. But back in the car, holding a squirming bundle of precious cargo to my chest, my thoughts drift to my old neighborhood park, to the dogs wearing booties and jackets as they trudged through heaps of brilliant snow.

I try to rationalize it, to blame it on a different region and the warm climate of the Mediterranean. Of course it wouldn't be cold here. Palm trees and snow don't mix. But as the years go by, the entire winter season shifts, mutates. Like cheap festive decorations, it becomes something fleeting, gone so fast you don't notice it was there at all. Cold becomes a delightful treat. Snow, a luxury—frosted gold, if you may. And yet, it's the rains that get stronger. The floods that rage fiercer. Warmed, liquid snow that devastates me.

I think of myself as an idealist, too hopeful with little real grounding. But perhaps one day, there will be a bright, cold morning in the beginning of December. And that day, the sun will gleam off of the distant snowcapped peaks again.

Ode to Skin

North Ceely

The wrinkled self traces across the
cracked ceramic self, kitsungi-crafted
and scarlett self, engraved with the
language of time and spoken once you
split and spilt that which you failed to
contain in a single line.

You do not bleed, but you are
the angel of bleedin—a bulwark
of intravenous intervention.

You are as Atlas was: employed by
the soul, spirit, and heart. An
intestinal encasement determining
organization and order, form and
friction.

Cold, you are blue-blushed; Warm,
burnt and burgundy,
Solar-slighted and slush-becoming
shy from extremes, a thing of
inexplicable apathy.

Adorned soon, painted over
in ivory or black hue. A
temple, yes, but I'd prefer a
kettle, as though I could
pour out of you.



Hands of life

Luci DiBonaventura



The Last One to Leave

Sarah Nakano

A Night to Remember

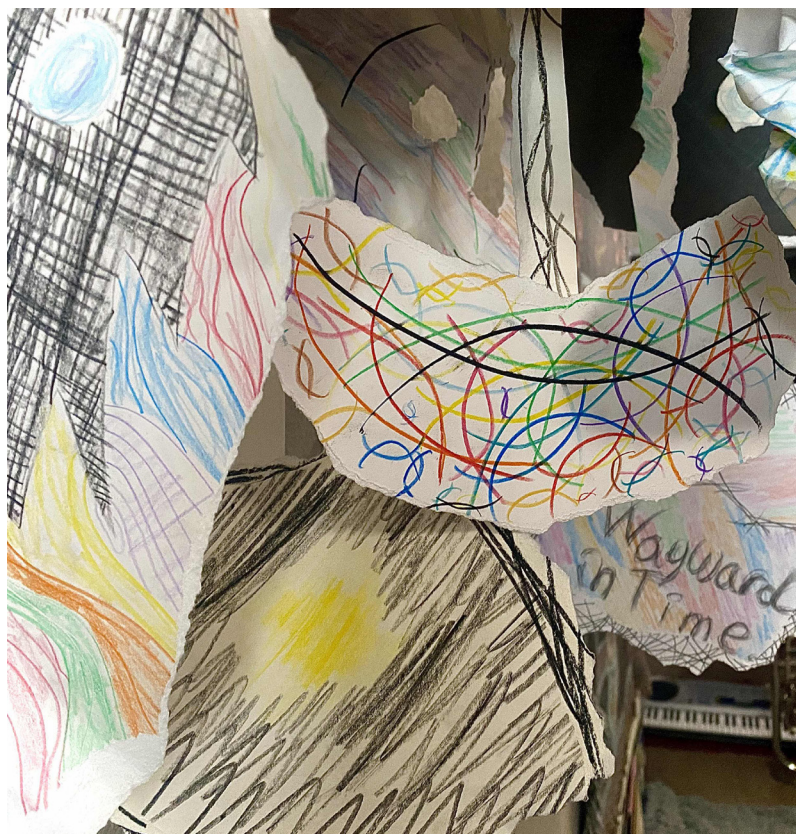
Savannah Arlington

Warm lights bloom in the corner where she
Curls a flame on our brand-new stove top
Slicing the rising heat with quick jabs
Of an old and worn steel pan we
bought last week Now coated with crumbs of charred
Chicken bits and cheesy alfredo sauce That
effortlessly lifts the potent smell of “Sugar Cookie”
hand soap from the tip of my nose I can hardly
remember the pains of yesterday Or recount the
work I have waiting for me tomorrow All that
concerns me is that prideful smirk Colored by quick
tastes of needs more salt and pass the pepper flakes,
please That I swipe from the curvature of her lips
Before passing her two matching plates And filling
our glasses to the brim For a wonderful moment
alone together



I Love My Fluffy Cat

Savannah Arlington



Pieced Together

Rem Actori

