

Garden Interlude V

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In the Bronx in February 2017, it is every word you associate with winter: *frigid, quiet, cruel.*

There's a cemetery across the street from Dad's nursing home and your favorite way to pass it is across the street in near sub-zero temperatures so that when you make the human error of shivering, you can blame it on the wind chill and not your twenty-six-year-old mind traipsing over the bitter irony of it all.

That your father—your athletic, strong, huge old man—is a tetraplegic, and from a fall of all things, and there's a cemetery a block long-covered in snow just a street away from your bundled, head-phoned form. Whenever you chance a glance down that path in your head, you focus on the melodic morphine beating away in your earlobes.

Today's a Muse day, after all: "Stockholm Syndrome."

But, the glance inside becomes a stare, then finally footprints through your mind and, for a beat, you wonder when your Pop has last seen roses or even sunlight since moving here. You shift the pizza box between hands. Although simple, it is a minor solution to the cravings and whims he gave you before this visit.

It's hot over your gloved hand and the delicious fusion of the chill in your coat, the warmth bleeding into the glove and the luscious "Stockholm Syndrome" is enough to erase the map upstairs.

Snow is absence: an absence of color, of warmth, of ground and sidewalks. You don't remember the last time you saw koi or a rose, but they're out there somewhere and so is April.



Muse

"Stockholm Syndrome"

Absolution

09/2003

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