

## The Meltdown

by Amber Watson

Drone of the alarm in winter's charcoal dawn—  
I pray for a delay at the altar of a dimly lit TV,

just a little more time to warm the bones  
before trudging to the town square stop.

Sharp wind thrusts the storm door open  
and sleet cuts sideways against the glow of streetlights.

In New England, there is no mercy  
for thin-blooded souls who curse the cold as I do.

The bitter crust of earth crunches under foot  
and frost forms at the edges of tear ducts

while I wait for the tiny capsule of heat  
winding its way through colorless streets.

I try not to forget there is a season  
for everything. Even misery

builds up quick like a snowdrift  
then dissolves into a trembling stream.

Each year, after every living thing  
has faded into the static white landscape,

I am still surprised by my joy to see dirt—  
small patches of it reemerging

on streets and sidewalks like a mirage—  
tiny sandbars exposed on a sea of melted ice,

their tiny speckles of light reflecting  
off my skin, warming,

reawakening to the gradual promise  
of sunlight.