

Meltdowns

by Nicole Kubilus

*Call it a blackout, a power surge
Too much energy locked in one place
Something's bound to explode
Sparks fly everywhere. Fires start*

*In my lungs, throat, stomach
I scream smoke, bellow tea kettle steam
There's a wildfire raging in my muscles
My body thrashes the way embers do*

*My arms and legs are red and orange
My chest bright blue. So much anger
So much stress, anxiety, exhaustion
Fire cannot be reasoned with, or controlled*

*I am literally a meltdown
Lava gushing out of a volcano
You throw water on me, I'm too hot
Turn the stream into steam*

*I travel mindlessly
Destroying everything in the way
Including my own hands and hair
I bite down, hit myself, rip something off*

*Even if I open my eyes, I'm blind
Too much smoke, light, scalding heat
I cannot see you. I cannot see that I hurt you
You're just in the way*

*But you are also the concrete barricades
That keeps the fire contained
You hold me so that my flames are tamed
Rooted by wooden planks*

*My fire can't move
So it starts to shrink
Smaller than hands, a finger, a nail
You blow it out*

*And I am left in the fetal position
Feeling burned. It's painful to move
Gasping for air, aware
Of how much destruction and loss there is*

*Then, the water inside me
Surges out of my eyes
I wish it were holy, cleanse me
So I'm not able to ignite again*

Shutdowns

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To prevent becoming
Raging river rapids
Tossing you like a rag doll
In my furious current

I merge with the iceberg
Cocooned in cold
Suspended in animation
Held in a subzero tomb

All I see is white
No sense of earth and sky
Like being swallowed
In an avalanche

To be stationary, steadfast
Endless, impervious
Isolated from mankind
Observing without engaging

Is exactly what I need
When life moves at the speed
Of a timelapse. Can a minute
Be as long as a day?

Call my name. Snap your fingers
Muffled voice is not warmth
Can't you see that I'm
Literally frozen?

So you take your pick ax
Chisel away the surface
With the intent to free me
But all you will do

Is turn me into
A frozen lake
That will swallow
You whole

I'm large, sharp icicles
Hanging perilously off the gutter
I'm a hail storm so vicious
That it divots concrete

Should I scream,
I'll snap like the iceberg
Severed from itself
Cannonballing into ocean

Leave me to be
An ice cube melting in a cup
Cold water becoming room temp
A puddle evaporating into air

In the time that winter
Turns into spring
I'll emerge from hibernation
And remember how to walk again