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Josie Kearns

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Josie Kearns

COLD BLUE

It was that winter my sister and I
 made the igloo you could die in
 if snowplows worked their teeth just right.

The snow hadn't been stained yet
 with the exhaust of cars, like how
 the moon hadn't been walked on yet

no icicle flag pinning it like a collector's bug.
 I fluffed down in drifts so deep I couldn't
 breathe. The snow had a too-white color, leached

out, the blue of detergent or that new popsicle
 coveted by grade-schoolers in 1962 as cool
 something unprovable as blue-veined flesh

caught in Yukon frostbite, blue gills under
 icy stream. We had heard but doubted that toes
 break off like ice cubes in our frosted metal

trays, that fish eyes harden to coal. I didn't
 understand then, the words: *uncertain, sure*.
 I thought maybe this was what blue with cold

meant, some backwards photosynthesis
 or the science of ghosts, but this was before
 cancer melted *his* lungs like blue snowcones

on a heating register, before an embroidered
 tree graced the inside of *her* casket, bluer
 than the gown of Pinocchio's blue fairy.

So I kept quiet one whole winter and the next
not knowing how certain it was
that cold blue had come into my life.