Cold Blue

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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

c 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.