

On Ice

Art **Poetry** Science

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In the Beauty of Ice Lies Our Salvation

In winter, we know this solid phase of water as instability underfoot, and associate its sparkle with danger and discomfort. It comes to us as snowflakes or pellets of hail; a morning glaze on windshield or road; breath turned visible.

We read of its thick, raw beauty in far off lands or on mountain chains; in the arctic attic and basement of our globe. We glimpse, through television, plant, bird, animal, or sea life dependent on the blue-white glaciers and sheets of ice that are shrinking. We notice the plight of peoples in Greenland, Alaska, and Northern Canada as global warming melts their livelihoods and traditions. Soon, we may notice the loss of drinking water, changing weather patterns, drought, famine.

Henry David Thoreau wrote: "In wildness is the preservation of the world." In the beauty of ice lies our salvation. Ice links us, more than we have known, with each other. Ice can save us now if we let its burn and beauty touch our hearts and teach us its necessity.

Marilyn Hazelton
Poetry consultant, *On Ice*

Heartwood

Streets flow in rivulets
cut through snowcrete and ice.
Crows caw above this music

of open faucets. Every tree
holds a small, patient thaw
while a roof looses its snow

in great, decisive sheaves
sliding from eaves to icy walk
like last week's laundry

down a cold chute.
One bare branch of sapling
bends until it kisses snow,

freezes to earth. Warming
will free it to arc gracefully
skyward, but its twin

has snapped under ice weight
and where it once reached up,
a sheered, rough blade of

heartwood exposes itself,
brittle and vulnerable. The world
tells a story today of bend

or break, reeds folded or snapped,
ice cracked or holding the weight
of one curious walker. Hurrying

before my step, a thawing flow
exposes itself under an unbroken
surface, while on a far coast

you sit, frozen to your bed,
a deer caught in the head-long motion
of earthquake and aftershocks.

Frantic, you said
you'd tied your cupboards shut
but only after the good china

had already flown and your grandmother's
crystal – the set you'd fought two sisters
to own – littered your kitchen in sharp,

dangerous shards you refused
to sweep up and throw away. Instead,
you grabbed for twine, determined,

battening down all your empty spaces
against the next onslaught.
All last week, far to your east,

I listened at my window to the whir
of car wheels going nowhere fast
on patches of intractable street,

while in this small suburban wood,
over these rocks, one unnamed
tributary of an unremarkable creek

moved continuous. Not just moved:
rushed. Now it laughs its resistance.
See here: A sleeve of ice

on a nearby oak loosens
all in a piece. Underneath,
water slips a small dark finger,

shifts what was once stuck,
solid, lets fall what will
fall, ready or not.

Ice Storm

Yesterday it rained in nails & knives.
A lead sky dripped pewter, turned the snow to ice;
joined sky to land in a single crust.
Now we're glazed in.
Even the juncoes skid at the feeder.

But today, the full sun jewels
a path of gold across the porcelain yard.
There is no trace of flower beds,
no breath from the herbs,
the roses are sheathed.

Some crazed glazier has cast these ceramics,
his icy touch in the glass garden,
but look, where the sun is touching,
everything, everything, everything's light.

Magnetic North

Exploring Ice

Ice.
Three letters.
One word.
I am amazed
at its extent,
its depth.
Searching
the world-
wide Web,
I discover
global
environmental
scientific
economic
political
personal
depths.
Here,
a crack
in a glacier;
there,
the tip
of an iceberg.
It all connects.
Explore
Reflect
Look
beneath the surface.

Ice.

In the Green House

with thanks to Al Gore and Robert Frost

the empire of ice

as the North Pole
floats, turning
clockwise;
we eat, sleep,
brush our teeth

Antarctica, coldest
place on earth:
Emperor Penguins
slide down glaciers,
bellies for sleds

was the smile
on the man
in the moon
carved
by ice?

ice goes where it must

Neptune,
rings of Saturn,
Halley's Comet,
our moon's
south pole

sheet, floe,
iceberg, rime -
we did not know
the poem of white
sustaining us

for love of ice
the sea whispers
come to me
come to me
the ice listens

song of ice

in the ninth circle
of Dante's Inferno
traitors are held
in the burn
of ice

if we do not love
our green house
it will end
in fire
not in ice

thinning as it
breaks apart
ice thunders
warning
into the sea

Ice Storm

let your rage carve me
see-through statue
glinting in a cold morning light

spring wind
waiting for the cherry blossoms
to thaw

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Note: Goodrich recommends the following sites for additional information:

www.nsf.gov/dir/index.jsp?org=OPP

www.ice.gov <http://nsidc.org>; www.usap.gov;

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