

# Let Me Drown

by Christian Bell

## **In Case You Missed the Recently Completed Winter (alternate title: F\$#k You, Miami)**

A camera whirred and wheezed but finally couldn't take the picture. A fish jumped out through the hole in the ice and it's still hanging there in midair. Our local low rent ice-based superhero said he'd had enough and would check back in early spring. A man wrote letters to his loved one who's in a warm place but, instead of mailing them, used the papers to keep a fire going. People are hanging out in the grocery's frozen foods section to warm up. I promised the space between us would thaw, that we'd find each other's hearts again, but it remained deeply frozen.

### **Oahu**

He sits on a chair in a darkened room. The darkened room has nothing else but a window. Through the window is the rest of the world, people walking dogs, zipping up to keep warm, not enjoying their freedom but rather ignoring it. He used to be free. Convincing himself he was truly free, more so than anyone else, he explored a path that led to this imprisonment. Now, a needle goes into his arm, and he's lifted in an Oahu wave, floating. He crashes over and over. The dead amass behind him, standing burials in harsh desert.

### **Mondo Cash from Fictionaut**

Here at Fictionaut, there's a little known secret about how you can work the algorithms of story views and faves into seriously mondo cash. Gone Conlon and I often sit poolside at my luxurious Côte d'Azur estate discussing our Fictionaut riches, lighting Gurkha Black Dragon cigars with €500 banknotes and watching life-size Kim Jong-il (yes, -il, not -un) ice sculptures melt in the rich sea breeze. You could make mondo cash and live the high life like we do but, unfortunately, I'm bound by a blood oath to withhold this secret until 2057. Sorry!

### **Whitecaps**

H. has an envelope with photos. He doesn't know how he got them.

A woman with flowing brown hair, a young boy and a younger girl near her legs. A large body of water in the background, whitecaps marking a rough weather day. Somehow he knows that these are the ones he must return to. In the brief hours he sleeps, he dreams of the woman, lying next to her in bed, morning sunlight washing out a sterile hotel room. In the picture, no one smiles.

### **Kosmopoisk**

We went to the lake and pitched tents. The sky frost, the water still and blue. The group humming by day and huddling by night and waiting for the surface to crack, for the cryptid to show. When you and I first locked eyes through claustrophobic parkas, I knew we would connect. Later in my tent, I asked, do you believe. Yes, you said, as you pressed my hand to the ground, the trembling coursing through our new shared appendage.

