

Snow

by angel readman

The snow is falling. That's all it does now. The snow falls everywhere, all the time. It falls soundless as apology.

'This is a nice place,' I say.

She talks about paints. I nod, like a man who cares about colours, like a man who knows the difference between antique white and Egyptian linen. All I see is snow. Her tasteful room filling with static like we are both within the tank of a badly tuned TV.

'It's really starting to fall,' I say, walking to the window. She hands me a glass, ice cubes jangle, hiss and crack as if something is breaking free from their freeze. She talks about window treatments, how the place is maybe too much for one. Wants me to know she's not much of a cook, and wants me to smell what's in her oven and compliment her cooking anyway.

I've heard of scenes like this, the first invite to an apartment, a sort of preview to see how someone lives their life. Cushions freshly plumped up, easy chairs for me to imagine every light of my life in. In her attentiveness to her guest, she wants me to see how easy she could make things. How there'd always be good coffee and wine in a place like this, room for me. She lights the fire, it crackles and sputters to wake.

'Better to be in, on a night like this,' she says, staring at the space beside her on the rug as she warms her hands, like a man is missing from its design.

The fire does not melt outside. The snow keeps going, always. White as tomorrow and a long time ago. I drink my brandy and its fire hits my gullet, topping up brandy's of winter's snowed on and thawed. The taste is mingled with a name, creaked from my lips, cracking as someone a lot like me stopped the car, ran towards a lake, following small footsteps, the trail of thoughtless words I'd exhaled into the air that chased a girl like a ghost was on her heel. It

was dark, except for snow. The girl stepped onto the frozen lake. Fell, to escape my hand on her arm. I did not push, I reached for her hand. I tread over her footprints, to catch an impression of me I couldn't let go.

The woman in the centre of her apartment asks if I'd like to hear some music and puts on a blizzard of jazz. Outside the snow keeps falling. I watch it cover buildings, twenty one, twenty three. I count the building until they are lost to snow.

'It's nice, not to have to talk all the time, just be comfortable enough to enjoy eachother's company,' she says.

My head knows how to nod, my face can smile in the right places, between the flakes. She talks about silence. The snow falls outside, over buildings, in the room between us. She keeps talking until we are both covered in snow.

