

Blizzard on 105th Street

by Bud Smith

i drive slow behind the salt spreader
the world is canceled for tomorrow

my radio is exploding with
herky jerky afro cuban
jazz brass wood
block breakneck bass

Machito and Charlie Parker

but behind a disintegrating
windshield wiper
everything is slate gray
and sucking its teeth
in anticipation

i drive slow behind this salt spreader
hazards flash reflect against
everything

sign on turnpike said:
SEVERE END OF TIMES CONDITIONS

—good!

? ready for severe
? ready for end times
? ready for conditions

the drummer is destroying
the trumpeteer is losing his shit

Available online at «<http://fictionaut.com/stories/bud-smith/blizzard-on-105th-street>»

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the trombonists, all twelve of them
they have to explain what snow is
on the telephone to mom (mami) and dad (papi) back home
and have to say, 'no it doesn't snow in California'
and live this thought:
'I miss where I'm from
my island of sugar and steam'

we're all foreigners here in NYC
no one was born here

king saxophonists is a making clouds collapse

my back seat has beer, has water, has mac and cheese, has peanut
butter, has toilet paper, has bourbon and tollhouse cookie dough, has
batteries and lightbulbs and lube and condoms

and I slap down the blinker
with an open palm
shut off the mile-a-minute pop of fireworks

then the silence levitates
over 112th street
and I sigh, "sorry Bird"

the sky outside sounds like a down blanket
the sky outside smells like industrial chemicals
the sky outside is leaning heavily
on every building and every head
and even on this windshield
I press down the gas

somewhere there's a blizzard
hitting the snooze button

rolling over in bed
stretching, blinking its eyes

but I
have to find
a parking spot
on this street
before 10pm
and there are
none

the salt truck makes a left by the park
I pull in face first at the hydrant

they're calling for 32 inches

no traffic cop
would ever remember
there's a hydrant, right here

fuck it
i'm canceled
for tomorrow too
I live here

as I walk towards 138 Haven
I still hear acoustic piano
that sounds like it surfs along the tides
and wears the tropical sun
in its summer hair
as the palm fronds shudder.

