

# The Arctic Express

by Elizabeth Kate Switaj

Sky: *Snows, turns dark.*

Street: *Freezes. Remains on a hill.*

Traffic: *None on this block.*

Two: Did I miss the bus?

One: You either missed it, or it didn't come.

Two: Hasn't come.

One: One or the other. Which one?

Two: I don't know; I asked you.

One: I meant which bus.

Two: ST220X

One: I'm ST325.

Two: How long have you been waiting?

One: *Holds up a wrist well-layered with gloves and sleeves, drops it before exposing anything. I don't know. My watch froze.*

Two: Since you've been waiting?

One: Since I've been waiting.

Two: You've been waiting long.

One: Have I? I don't know. My watch—

Two: Froze.

One: Right.

Four Hands: *Rubbed together, stuck in pockets, pulled back out and breathed upon.*

Two: Is that a bus?

One: Headlights anyway.

Traffic: *A white bus swirled with ambiguous blues and greens takes ten minutes to traverse a block.*

Bus: Stops. *Opens door. Displays no number.*

Driver: Get in fast. The brakes can't hold for long.

One: *Bounds onto bus, flashing pass.*

Two: Which bus is this? Where are you going?

Driver: Everywhere we can get. This is the Arctic Express; get on.

Two: *Steps away.*

Bus: *Begins to slip.*

Driver: Your loss.

Bus: *Closes door. Crawls away. Disappears after five minutes.*

Two: Must be fog. Maybe they'll let me sleep in Starbucks.

