

Going in Circles

by Fred Osuna

I reach the corner, stop, push the button, shove my hands into the pockets of my hoodie, stamp my feet to force some warmth into them. It is seventeen degrees on the street, but warmer than in that room with its plastic window pane, its curled and yellowing linoleum floor. The sun is shining here, though, even if the ice isn't melting.

Once, I asked my father why Rex turned around three times before settling down for a nap. He told me it was because one good turn deserves another, then he laughed. Rex looked uncomfortable. Dad had no idea, I think now.

The light turns green, and I cross and double-back on the opposite side of the street. They're watching me from that Chick-fil-A, through the window, that man and his two kids. One of the kids is pointing, his mitten dangling from the wrist of his orange parka. He's pointing at me.

Sometimes there's a Help Wanted sign on one of the shop windows, but not today. I could use some work, just to feel some food in my belly. I'd do anything that needs doing, even if it's just taking out the garbage. I loop back around the block once more. Twice, just to be sure. Still no signs.

People see me. I want them to know that I'm serious. They must wonder why I keep circling the block. Do they? Do they wonder?

I'm like a dog, and they just don't speak my language.

