Ice Bar

by Niya C. Sisk

Bottles of Makers Mark Bourbon hit the can every five minutes. Kissing strangers to make sure my lips are still there is completely acceptable here. Lots of people do it. There's just no escape from the slick, hard, cold. The hair on the back of my neck stands up in a feeble attempt to function as an insulating fur.

I can't stop looking at the burly man to my left with the blue lips and three-inch mustache. He orders his fourth whiskey. He laughs at my melancholy like it was a flat thing--a dead animal to strip of its fur. Why be melancholic when you can float on whiskey in a blue ice bar?

Take that table over there. It looks pretty high class. The surface seems to be made of Italian marble. But it's just more of it — the ice, that is. He throws me on the table, like he's doing me a favor. He slides his fur cape down -- a little too late -- under me. He makes my ass blue in circular, aggressive motions. A smiling pirate inventing his own itch to scratch. But his rebellion tires me. I take my cold feet to his heavy belly and push him away.

These thoughts pass through me in an instant as a woman next to me turns and asks why I am here. She has dark thick straight hair and three freckles on her nose. She's wearing a camisole and a heavy navy colored sweatshirt, a short skirt and tall furry boots. What's with the fur in this ice bar? It's not like everyone lives in igloos here and relies on animals for their beds. This isn't pre-civilization. This is full of the elite who, over a cigarillo and anchovies say to their friends: I did it. I went ice picking—it was glassy, it was blue, I saw a fish frozen into the ice, I almost hit it with my pick.

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I look her up and down in an obvious way. “I'm here to set fire to old debris in my life. I'm here…” I say… “to buy boots like yours and ask someone like you to hike with me in the mist.

I want to feel scared and new again.”