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Growing Up in Minnesota

Richard Jennis

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Growing Up Minnesota // Richard Jennis

Quaint little towns,
Nestled in the proud white ridges,
The powdered dawn sticking to my eyebrows
And the absolute nature of wind.

Customers clumsily tripping
Over thank you's
In the supermarket aisles.
Sacrificing Starbucks
To the Caribou Coffee powers that be.

Screaming over the Washington Avenue Bridge
Like rollercoaster enthusiasts.
Losing all sense of control
When the car skids,
Feather-light and clutching for safety
Like upended bugs.

Snow-smothered plants
Suffocating beautifully
In the heartless midnight,
Beside the highway that leads
From my house to the moon.

Scandinavian descendants
Practicing the minutia of propriety.
The slanted view from my bed,
As I peek through half-frozen windows
At half past two.

That sight as the plane descends
Toward an alabaster daydream,
Minneapolis flickering like Hanukkah candles
Fighting a Northeastern gale.

And the life I compiled
Like scraps of wood,
Reminiscing over bonfire glow nights
We chose to make the most of,
Arms and backs peppered with mosquito welts
And bragging how only we knew
How to keep our hearts warm.

When I returned, I screamed,
“Don’t ever let me leave again!”
Arms flailing, lips quaking, heart palpitating.

But I swear
On those 10,000 lakes
I meant to say
I loved it far too much to stay.