



# “Parade of Whatever’s”

It’s cold here, deep-down-into-the-minus-double-digits-of-January kind of cold. Bones chilling, chilling. Don’t-fail-me-now chilling bones, she thinks every time she steps out into the chill of her morning walks. Now *this* is winter.

The motel’s rhythms are becoming familiar. Mornings start early and the snow’s fresh bounty arrives like a daily pillow fight gone massive. Most of the wintry guests are workers, dressed in heavy gear for rugged outdoor work. After the help-yourself breakfast they clear out of the room as if to the sound of some buzzer that only they can hear—but not before helping themselves to their fill of milk and juice containers, bananas, apples, whatever, whatever they can slip into the hunger of their pockets. Flakes as light and dry as feathers want no effort to clear off windshields of SUVs and trucks and more trucks that fill the motel parking lot. One by one, engines come to life and then it begins, the slow parade of vehicles down the Alaska highway.

Today the motel’s rhythms skip a beat with the arrival of a new someone in the breakfast room. He’s been to see his son and grandkids, he says. With a long drive back, it’s best if he stops in for a night before heading home. Home is where he used to be a mayor, where he used to have a wife. She was always on him about his burger, his fries, his beers, his whatever’s. Oh to hear from her again.

By Lydia Lovison

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