

Laurie Watel

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*I Awoke on the Edge*

I awoke on the edge of a field, a snow-covered meadow plated with sunlight, and the sky was bright white and unnatural, and the silence was white, too, a ravenous silence, and the birds had all gone away, and the squirrels were burrowed in the deep, and behind me the trees creaked in their bones, and the snow clung to their limbs, to their limbs down to the needles, the snow was layers thick and smooth, flawless across its surface like something spread by a machine, and sunlight skimmed over the surface of the snow as if it were an impenetrable metal, and I stepped onto the field holding my breath because I didn't know how firm the snow was, or how deep, but it wasn't the snow that gave with my every step, it was the silence, how I sank into it up to my knees, the silence crackling around my feet, pulling me down with a sharp gravity, and I slogged through the silence, my breath shrouding my face, and the silence sliced through my lips, through my throat and into my lungs, the silence swallowed up my chest, and how close it seemed, the other side, so I kept going, kept stepping across the snow-covered meadow, across the sunlight, across the glittering silence, which lit me up, me, who'd always bristled in silence, darkly.