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Winter

Chain Shields

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Winter

Chain Shields

i.

Winter

Is a wraith or a fae

Who sleeps beside you until all your warm pulse heat rush life

fire goes seeping into them,

Not seeping but devoured,

Not devoured but stolen,

Not stolen but whispered silver things to until it extinguishes

itself all on its own, a fading sun behind the mountain range,

or the swift loss of breath to a candle.

I cannot tell if the cold is a lacquer—ice over the digits, sealing them stiff and frozen—or a lack, a flooding out of warmth and tender movement into void like blood spilt from the throat of a calf;

I have a hard time believing that gravity couldn't keep at least some of the iron in me if I was bled out at the birthmark,

But farmers and butchers know it is easy to lose everything quick:

So know my bones in the winter.

ii.

The only time things stop moving completely is at
absolute zero, they say.

Even your hat,

Your bones,

Coffee grounds,

The chicken in the freezer. Everything vibrating molecularly

affirming its life,

Its shape,

Its continued existence,

Only for January to render all of us shades—a hall of statues,

And he the cockatrice, or gorgon, but colder.

iii.

I live where wildfires sprout like poppies,
Golden in the hills; even the towers wreathed by silver fog
Blare rust red.
Sun gods send their sons the rays to tickle and dust my shoulders,
As though I am not permanently dappled,
Pale and pitter-pattered.
They say there is no winter here,

But I still feel it biting at my fingers,

Leeching from them movement,
Briskness' malice sapping, lapping out
My flesh's elasticity,
The curl and stretch of knuckles,
My wingspan's
breadth, Binding,
Leaving only shivers as echoes of the thrumming
hummingbird heartbeat,
Amber summer struggling to be free.