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Blue Ice

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Blue Ice

Behind the school, sliding away down
the hill to Robinson's Corner Drug, the ice
pulled us from our rooms. While snow lay solid
around us, deep as the bus windows,
ice spread in a blue ribbon clear
to the hard bone of earth. We ran
for all the minutes a school day stole,
flying down the sun-glazed path.

What did we care about torn skirts, lost
mittens, broken arms, or the dip at the end
spilling us into the street like loose change.

That last day before Christmas held us
enthralled until the bell

set us free, fighting our way to be first.

I jumped and sailed down the slope
one last time, not knowing my house
was burning, the snow shrinking
away into useless vapors. My arms and legs
held out like spokes, I spun
as the smoke rose and the bells
rang their warnings, but I wasn't listening.

The world was a tumble
of sky, and I was spiralling

through its center, tumbling through
the pure air of winter. The ashes would go on
floating, ashes of plaster and paper, doll
stuff and the sheets of sleep, floating
for hours, while I waited for the hard
lip of ice to tip me out, leaving me
grounded and dazed, everything blue, flames
dancing just where the sun touched, then gone.