Fall 1980

Darker

Laurie Cosca
DARKER

The dog has run away again. Her day off she drives through Fairbanks snow-covered streets calling him, to come home quiet, eyes animal-like with his loss.

After dinner her husband heats water for the dishes, saves some for her hair. She leans into the deep bucket as he pours water over her head, holds her small waist while she towel dries her hair.

The dog is not waiting for her but the woman knows where he would have lain, and how her hand would have passed over the stiff-furred head. She creates a curve of warmth in the bed.

Her husband does what has become habit: smoking after dinner, pulling her to him the way he drags wood every morning. She wants to tell him that strength is not everything.

She stares at his boots and her shoes near the door, as if parts of them are always leaving places. He sleeps. The room is too dark for her. Alaska is darker than any place on earth.