

freezing point feels

lived on \$27 worth of groceries a week
on cliffs standin' watch over the North Atlantic
150 feet 'bove waves loud enough to drown
out out out and back Cuckold Head

inland. March: drivin'
slushy ice roads on da pond
ice huts packed 'way weeks ago
night still heavy, bones creakin'

back of the cab knees knocking
knees touching, knuckles meet knuckles
cold? as the driver slides around one-ways
h'yuh. inhalation enough to shatter glass

call it a fort, 2 branches 40 feet up
plank of wood, milk crate
another day: pulled a vine, landed on back
another day: slipped from rock, landed on frozen log

night: wonder what the sky
looks like under the icebound lake
what the freezing point feels
like on the inside

awake by the mercy of Red Bull
what I'd really like is to go home with you.
tip-of-the-tip-of-the-tongue
honestly, I'd just fall asleep

got \$10 to last the week
pair of skates that don' fit
minimum wage for Maximum Ice
no cell reception out North Head Trail

Married 3 Times

Mom says I was married 3 times before I turned 5
I know 2 names, but the 3rd I remember meeting
Twice, at the beach
 Something stunning about the inherent mnemonic value
 of Mint Chocolate Oreos and warm chocolate milk
 at a picnic bench

A steel slide, later removed after a kid
4 years my younger broke his arm on it,
his parents complained
The dry dry wooden posts we balance up
so we can be big kids

Crepuscular swims after the teen lifeguards
have gone home and our mid-life parents can
post-work-sit on benches
We do flips when we're not rending flesh to remove
slivers we got from the century dock

Married 3 times even before they tore it up, rebuilt the waterfront

5-year-old me coifs his mullet, or “boy haircut” as I knew it then,
understanding all there is to love and marriage
– Just kidding – I lived in swimming shorts
Got a bath once per week, tops

Bitterwhite Pith

The skin of a ripe tangerine is an inadequate map of our fine Earth

Notwithstanding, the pits and scars are clear metaphors from a Higher Power

– maybe the moon, that perennial Lady-in-Waiting? –

that the zip and zest of our surface life is only

a hair's breadth from the bitterwhite pith underneath the shell;

that our milquetoast Mercator maps hide bitterwhite resentment

Peel back the skin

Watch it fall into the fresh, filthy agglomerate of the compost bucket

Were it not for *Penicillium* brothers

– *italicum* and *digitatum* –

the inadequate map would grow sable in mourning, like the intergalactic *Musa acuminata*

left out too long. And, sure, *M. acuminata* gets the hypocorism treatment

with “Nanners” with which our Citrus Earth is never blessed,

but would you rather turn to mush or watch a green-blue forest cover the continents?

Fancy grocery:

Nanners: \$1.79/kg

C. tangerina: quadruple

tiny sounds

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willing whisper of mist filling the arms of the fir trees

bed of moss hums in harmony, loss of bounce – no second
steps lest ye be judged, stop crescendo, tiny violins –
so much life from such little death yet we limit death still

pine needles pine for a summer's rain to drum paradiddles
on their boughs, to bring trembling dry brown needles down to earth
as breath of the clouds tiptoes its dance on flexing green sprigs

tiny sounds to keep the island breathing juniper songs

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and for all this hide I in light hushing acidic soil

wearing a coat of feathers and leaves, a mask of grey mud
brush stroke under the spruce and speak not, squeak not where I lie
wishing whispers were for me alone, knowing they are not

a summer book of songs sung without words, without open mouths
tickle of fine fibrous twigs shushing the late audience
for to this choir we are young, are loud – mind your manners

bear a likeness to lichen if you want to sing along

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Orizuru

Golden-headed butcher
sweet-nectar mind
fold a paper crane

Place atop shiny red eggs
hidden in tailorbird's nest

Watch the rip stitch thread cradle creation
out single-pane meat-counter windows

Grit teeth
spread sawdust
start bandsaw

Walk-in cooler
lock and light on outside

Petal fold
peach paper wings
around wet pockets of metallic-tasting air

Know all their names
village a renzuru configuration

Plod linden-topped linoleum
heavy like hands

Golden-headed passerine
pull out paper crane
set free to find paradise

Fold a paper crane
golden-headed butcher