

The Plough

Matt Payne

The snow was devastating as I made my way downtown. I had to conjure up all my motivation for each thick footstep in the knee-deep snow. I should have taken the bus, but I hate taking the bus. It should only take twenty minutes to walk downtown, but this felt like hours. Had I already walked by that building? Old gray stone like many of this city's old buildings. In the dark they all looked the same.

I looked around again for Ron. Ron was still gone. We'd departed together. When did I lose him? It was dark enough that he could be close by and I wouldn't see him through the heavy snowfall. Snow should be white but in this darkness it was gray. I called out, "Ron!" But even if my feeble voice had escaped the scarf around my mouth, it would be drowned by the snow-plough behind me, scraping steadily along like a monster.

I was sure I'd passed by this church before, but I was also sure that I hadn't turned any corners. So it must be a different church. Lots of heritage in this city.

I couldn't walk on the sidewalks because they were dominated by a snowbank like a mountain range, with peaks and troughs by no pass through which to escape the road. All I could see was what the lamplights illuminated, and all of that was covered in snow. My knees were so tired, so tired of walking. This felt like a commercial for depression. I actually felt like giving up, but that plough behind me might not see me.

Had I passed that building already?

Where was Ron?

My ass muscles hurt from lifting my legs. My jeans were soaked right through. I wished I'd worn snowpants. I wished I'd taken the bus. The lamps all looked the same. They say every snowflake is unique, but they all looked the same to me. Peaceful little snowflakes falling from the heavens, working together to crush my spirit.

Deep down I knew that it shouldn't take so long to get downtown, even in this snow, but what else could I do? The effort of pushing forward, step by step by step, was already devouring my motivation. I couldn't think of these higher problems. These identical buildings. These hours and hours and hours... It was darkness all ahead, decorated with streetlights and snowflakes and the promise of difficult footsteps.

And that snow-plough. It seemed to be gaining on me.