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touch, or, beautiful people

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Three Poems

Clara Anderson-Cameron

touch, or, beautiful people

it's the first real snowfall and I'm outside of the library, through the secret exit,

the side door.

there are people there with me, beautiful people next to me and we are rolling big wet piles of slush

and snow

and leaves

across the patch of grass that we expose in intersecting black lines to build a snowman the height of me,

and I'm tilting my face to the sky

and the flakes are kissing my cheeks and

I wonder if anything else will be allowed to touch me there, where fine lines
under my eyes have appeared, jarring, in the mirror and I can't decide whether to

hate them

or love them with a fierce protectiveness because they're

mine

and I *earned* them.

see how I've smiled?

more so in recent months, thanks to these beautiful people in the snow and
the one

with long red hair that's flecked with strands of gold is cold and
the one

with soft eyes and strong shoulders pulls close to her and takes two
icy hands between her own.

together they become a small painting in the dark,

I think I'm the artist with my gaze that freezes them where they're half con-
cealed by the clouds of steam that expand after each exhale and I'm glad I
can't quite see their eyes,

their lips,

the red of their noses,

the glint of their dark mouths when they say things,

quiet things,

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insignificant things, I'm sure, but still, my eyes drop away

because it feels too intimate, too foreign, like listening in on a goodbye when
you're in a different country, where tongues form different sounds,

beautiful,

sad,

longing sounds

and from my vantage point, I do feel worlds away because never have I invited
such closeness never has someone drawn near to me only because I was
cold and irresistible

and later when the one with soft eyes gestures me to her side so that we are
standing there, three dim forms against the newborn snow, I feel

trapped,

(warm)

and cornered,

and I am too close to their beauty, too conspicuous, and I wonder how long
they will tolerate me out here under the biting snow and when it hits my
cheeks now

I feel it sting

and I wonder if anyone will ever touch me like that

and if I might let them.