

THE COLD, ALERT

(a text composed in twitter while screening The Shining)

roxanne m carter

she travels a cozy curlicue of road. the wife concerned, a confirmed ghost. she reflects on the thinness of air, a girl's sheer dress, a starched sheet. here is a question she doesn't want answered; appearances out of nowhere. she observes the interlaced fingers of girls in identical dresses, lamenting their unreadability. her tongue tethered to the mountain. already there is a door. a door that shivers, swells and fills the landscape, towering over her. a door replicating itself.

a door has opened; this has happened. she can see that this is not good. *stay out*, she says. she is warmed by the habit of the everyday. a clatter of clutter, collapsing.

hollow hollow hollow and a lamp turned low.

whenever she enters, something breaks.

distressed by her desire to fill this empty spot: the snow continues to fall. the cut too much. a simple gesture of her hand puts a stop. she recognizes a map where before there was only a window. the hallway withdrawing, gathering into a knot. she regrets this blood, the room she sent him back to.

raising her blanket of snow.

the sheets of bold women.

things she never noticed before, long present, abandoned in dust. she has made this immaculate room. this is her way. the way a woman settles for a space. here is a lovely carpet.

she has controlled things by way of a choice she made when entering this door. the memory has already gone bad. she knows there is more here than this yellow, floral... this light left on.

a split and a surge, the jaw drops, her hands fallen limp, a catastrophe of broken china in the kitchen. the room improved by the entrance of the sea. a scene she's never seen. a moment excerpted, suddenly reinstated. the familiar rendered strange. this still life could have been erased. it usually is. a correction she receives; rejects. a girl with a long sentence wrapped around her. *go into your room*. she knows what should be done. she knows how to play.

it is difficult for her to see what the shadows are doing. *go to your room*, she says. there are too many rooms to run to; too many places to hide. her love of sentences ends. her hands swipe the air, as if she could catch something, find something to hold on to. the blank wilderness. the cold of no way out.

the demands of these rooms on her heart, her belly. the resourcefulness of a wife.
the last one. the word in her mouth, uttered backwards. the knife in her hand held sideways.
she choose a door to break. *i'm home*, she says, putting her mouth to the keyhole.

his is a game she plays with herself. run and hide, run and hide. the wolf is at the door. the strings shriek and shiver. a drawer, a cupboard, a casket; a good place to rest.

she begins at the center of the room. arrayed celestial stairways, swathed in velvet. somehow she will find her way back. she will trap this beast by erecting a wall around it. she walks backwards through the snow. she repeats the word, *widdershins*.

the injection of an image into a white, sterile space. blood stains her silk dress. a child in her arms. despite the brightness, the blankness, no one trembles. she holds the wail that will ruin her. she regrets the agony of an unanswered cry. the walls remain, dusted white and gleaming.
to make it clear, a close-up.