

from Juked #7, Spring 2010

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WORKING THE EVENING SHIFT AT THE ICE HOTEL,
QUEBEC CITY

I wipe the ice swan.
My dust rag sticks to its throat,
a curious tongue.

Even the sun
is ice. I
watch it die,
slipping like a suicidal head
through the river's glittering crust.

Fragile as frost
the lace curtains crackle,
frozen tatting
fracturing against
my breath-heated hands.

I pity the lovers. They come
to this frigid place
thinking they can melt
their ice beds with their torrid
sex-rubbing, their hot-lunged lust.

All around me,
ice-beds groan.
The lovers boil in their juices.

Still,
the thawing is always minor -
a few tears pouring

from the ice-mattress.
I hear the tears
smacking against the ice
floor, each one
cracking
into spiky
salt-free shards.

I sweep them up.