**Ice**

I use the slippery blood of guilt which jangles around under my skin to get my work done and write essays and turn them in and go to class and drink until I don’t think and think until the waves of guilt subside enough to drink until I smoke and giggle and cry and listen and sway to terrible dub step and pink flashing lights and wake up to hot eggs, hot and falling apart from each other and get mushy enough in the gut that I have to go to the gym to salivate on the treadmill and look at my reflection in the big windows but feel good walking back sore to the freshman common room where I stare at my homework and then kiss you for two hours and then use my sheets to drown my body to sleep unless the essay due date is tomorrow in which case I’ll keep my eyes exploding with tiny green pieces of my insides all night on the moldy orange and purple chairs and then force myself into the great cold blue air and then the red warm cafe and drink a gingerbread caramel latte and write my essay until the computer clock tells me to stop.

“Be quiet,” my RA Anna squeaks when I try to play guitar. I play quietly but the walls are made of Swiss cheese. Anna lives right next to me but I’ve never seen her face. She inhabits layers of scarves and jewelry and lipstick and bumpy, sculpted eyelashes and pale, cakey foundation.

“No one’s asleep,” I say. It’s only 4pm.

“There are consideration hours during midterms,” Anna squeaks back through the cheese walls. “24-hour silence. Didn’t you see the signs I taped up?”

“No,” I smash my fingers up down up down on an F chord.

“People are studying.”

“Let music into your life.”

So I get a noise violation and have to talk to a bald man for five minutes. Before she writes down my ID number, Anna walks over and says in the doorway, “Stop breaking the rules.”

After that I try to break the rules as often as I can. I pocket cheerios and forks and apples and slide whipped cream cans into my backpack when I leave the dining hall. I pee in the boy’s bathroom and get you to pee in the girl’s bathroom. I sit on the roof of my building, gazing at the long triangles of drifting snow that the streetlights make in the black night, and flipping sticks and pieces of ice over the edge so that they fall past Anna’s window. My friends and I scream “shots of vodka!” when we drink shots of vodka and then hide everything in a drawer when Anna marches over. She squeaks, *is there alcohol here* from behind the scarf that covers her sharp lips and we say *nope, isn't it a lovely evening*.

After a week of silence Anna finally retaliates. She writes me up for sneezing after the hour of 1 a.m. She tells me I have two noise violations and am now on thin ice. I ask her why her voice is squeaky and she narrows her eyes so I ask why her eyes are narrow.

You and me have a conference about the amount of time we are spending together and decide for the sake of our studies that we should go to bed earlier. There are papers and gum wrappers and books and water bottles piling on top of each other on my desk. A layer of clothes which squirm under my feet when I sneak back from the night to tiptoe past my sleep-talking roommate is building and acquiring a stench. It’s time to get organized and normal. I do my laundry and we promise we’ll go to bed early.

We are on our way to sleep but you catch me by the lip on the way to your room and our tongues and stomachs touch and then my friend stops me and his mouth and eyes swing upwards into scowl and he asks if I’ve filled out his online survey and of course I address him sarcastically with red laughing mouth and cheeks and his features fall back down into a grin and then later while I am brushing my teeth you remember that my coat is dark and soft on your dark soft floor and bring it to me and I poke your cheeks from both sides and we lie in your bed and turn our faces over the sheets and time turns one hour over into two so we get dressed to go outside and use our meal swipes before they expire and bring our backpacks to read in the library but two swaying meaty boys with candle eye glints wrap words around us into a conversation and offer us smoke and paper and we say no and grunt about the night and offer us smoke and paper and we say yes and then walk with giggles jumping out of our sealed mouths like water jumping out of a glass on a shaking table and sit in the library and beam at each other confused about the gap between our books and the world.

The old, wiry man who closes the library catches the end of our one a.m. kisses and says *when the library closes you guys gotta get the heck out* and *it’s not time to get all lovey dovey* and then leaves and walks through the blue night, onto the red train, into the black tunnel.

The next day we walk to the T while my dad cleans thousands of shards of things out of his San Francisco basement and they shift in his arms and drip from his fingers like piercing rocks when he turns hunched over with carrying and his thick beard and eyebrows move with him across the room. On the train, we eat burritos and your stomach bubbles like no one else’s. When you laugh your thick, goofy yellow hair shakes and your light green eyes collapse into strips of eyelash and your teeth look pointy like a werewolf’s. You have a cute, soft nose you say you wish was more ugly and manly. I tell you you look like a handsome psychopath from a movie. Boston has a red apocalyptic sky and red staggering huge, smooth buildings and red billboards advertising vodka and red, cold lips of people walking by.

This night it’s 4:37 a.m. when I tap open the door with one finger and tiptoe through the sliver of light that falls into my room out of the hallway and my roommate’s mouth tilted back from the covers is wide like she’s swallowing her dreams. You follow me, swinging and catching the door so it almost smacks the room into to noise and life, but doesn’t. You are carrying the papers and books and headphones and computer charger chords that I left in the common room. “Ssh,” I whisper with a goofy, maniacal grin and feel my heart leap into my throat like a frog testing its legs as sleep deprived joy and panic confuse each other inside my chest. You let my things tumble into my bed and my phone slips from the space between your pinky and your hip and I giggle and then look away but you grab my hand and touch the hot, sharp tear blooming in the corner of my eye.

“Are you okay?”

“I’m just stressed.”

“Is there anything I can do?”

“No,” I laugh.

“What’s funny?”

I laugh again, “Goodnight.”

You say goodnight and I don’t look back at you when you leave.

Some nights I dream that I’m walking through the library shelves and they are smooth rectangles that pass into more shelves that never end. My left boot squeak-moans a high-pitched squeak-moan on every other step. But some nights I dream in hysteric epileptic bursts of scrubbing black paint off my eyelids and cheeks that smears and jerks under my twitching hands but doesn’t come off and I scream *I love you* soundlessly into the side of my mom’s face but she doesn’t believe me. From far away you look more crooked and lovable, all lopsided from the side with your hair small on one side and big on the other and your neck light brown and vulnerable, leaned over your paper. Two days later I actually text my mom *I had a dream about you haha, I miss our conversations* and she doesn’t respond for a while which is fine because parent texts don’t follow the rules. The rules say that sweaty, food smeared thumbs compose an interconnected web of tiny guilts and sores that stretch on forever like red and white lights on the highway.

We go to a concert and it’s a small show so we stand at the very front and look up at the angry musicians whose bodies without sound look bent and ugly. A guitar starts and a white-faced girl steps forward and her features under the light look strange and ugly like they are too big or too close to the edges of her face. Then she lets her head collapse towards the mic and her song begins to fall slowly out of her and the whole room changes. We are limp and uniform on the puppet strings of her voice. She tells us that there are birds inside her throat trying to crawl down and peck crumbs off of her heart.

One day I am inside Anna’s room trying to find and remove the fake, mocking Valentine’s Day card you wrote to Anna in a moment of hysterical, mean-spirited glee and I leave her door cracked open so that I can hear if anyone walks up the stairs and I tiptoe over the carpet and open groaning drawers and lift up pillows. The building that I will live in next year will be brick red and we will walk around its hallways with half circles of sleepless ache around our eyes and over the summer I’ll forget that you exist in three dimensions and you’ll frown a nervous frown when we Skype and blood will fall faster past my heart when your name glows on my phone. I hear four boot steps follow each other right outside the door and I freeze in a spasm of stillness with one of Anna’s textbooks in my hand. I know that she’s stopped outside because she is interested in the not-closed nature of the door she left closed when she departed and I imagine her head cocked side ways, eyes narrow, mouth frowning so heavily it almost slips from her face. She throws the door open and her figure fills up the door way.

“That’s it!” she says.

“What do you mean that’s it?”

“You’re not living here anymore.”

A petrified grin squeezes my lips apart and I chuckle, “What?”

“You’re not living here anymore. I don’t have to put up with this.”

“What do you mean? ”

“I’m filing a harassment complaint with Rez Life.”

“That’s crazy.”

“You’ll be moved to a different building.”

“There must be something else.”

Anna is silent for a moment and gives me a hard look that makes me feel closer to her than I ever have, like her fingernails are under my skin, “It’s over.”