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After So Long, We No Longer Send Photos

After so long, we no longer send photos
of ourselves back home, where sisters
and brothers have become like distant relatives.
Lost loved ones, separated not just by the miles.
The snow falls in white pellets.

Outside my window, the world has frozen again,
but we've adjusted ourselves so well,
the snow brings us simple laughter.

We used to rush outdoors at the first snow fall,
all cuffed and collared, scarves, falling off
as we grabbed on to toddlers that the children
were, and a camera, falling sometimes
in the snow pile.

Mlen-Too, sometimes on his knees for the missing
camera, as if in search of the missing years.
And I'd be there, keeping the children
from throwing off a scarf here or there.

The camera snapping, one child here in one arm,
another standing on a snow mountain
at the front yard, where Byron Center still
stands aloof as if becoming home, our new
borrowed homeland just for a while.

I'd be twisting and turning, begging the baby
to smile so Grandma and Grandpa would see
how a grandchild can sit on snow
and be an angel in the snow pile on the lawn.
Flashing camera, and neighbors staring

from behind silent windows. Today, when the snow
arrived, I looked outside, where the window
can hide everything else. All the children
are now taller than trees, and the snow mountain
has lost its sense of purpose.

Sometimes, I just want to get up and walk back
home, where my father, having given in to gray
hairs, sits despite the years and the loss
and the emptiness.

Sometimes, I can feel the snow falling
in my father's yard, in a land of no snow
and all the children in my father's neighborhood
are bracing for the chill, in boots and scarves,

with mittens on tiny fingers, running and screaming,
their parents, taking photos to send to us
here in America. Maybe it is snowing everywhere,
and all the world is the same. Maybe.

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