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### Rotten Ice

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SIBELAN FORRESTER

**Rotten Ice**

Stolen from Iugo Iul'evich Surhasko

I stay near the edge even now,  
I never loved the risk  
of temporary winter bridges.

I didn't know him well, only knew  
that he was the favorite son,  
the favorite grandchild, smallest  
smile in the family photograph.  
What was he doing, calling the fishes?

One of those men's games boys will imitate  
until they learn the import of their weight.

Today I wait to see:  
after the rain, the ice breaks up  
into flutes, into icicles, and falls  
in tiny armies into deeper water,  
as wind lifts the cold from the lake  
and takes it up the street  
into the city. Breathe death, all of you  
who walk there, praying for spring.

As the ice dies it chatters "Nick Nick Nick!"  
in crystal sugar voices, as my aunt  
sings out to his lost body to float home.