



1997

Pt. Barrow, Alaska

Krista Halverson

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Pt. Barrow, Alaska

Krista Halverson

6 a.m. drizzle feels the way I look.
Lean and cold like this hair I cut myself
in better weather. I was thinking my life
could use a little more of anything.

I feel it in my teeth today, at the core
like Mom said might happen, from cold or not
leaving right, and she has heard that two in three
Alaska days are black. I guess she wonders

like I do: how we come to leaving;
or why I hate her two-tone shoes and Sunday marble cake.
And like my brother, who has been working swing,
and comes home to sit. Alaska, huh?

Alaska. But I don't care for reasons. I ignore jerks
on the news saying most of us can't read—
that teenagers with skin sores are breeding
apathy in basement greenhouses.

My parents watch three hours of broadcasts
a day, and remind me of what I don't know
about the Civil War. They stash away gift books:
Colonial Williamsburg, and do not remove the plastic.

I've been here two weeks or three.
Guess not caring's got me grabbing. Now
I remember Dad at the airport, talking
to the brochure I gave him of the tundra. You can stay

if you want. Then relief when I'm gone.
I am sorting fish, with bare hands and boots slicker
than blood across teeth. My teeth and this hair
and a dead robin on the walk home.