

Winter Haibun – Walking Mountain Wimp

By Derek Loewen

I walked this decommissioned road to the *Lodgepole Pub* years ago, but I've listened to this same Destroyer song on repeat for the last ten.

“Wasting your days/ chasing some girls/ all right chasing cocaine/ through the backrooms of the world/ all right” – Dan Bejar

But now it's winter and I'm three years older and sober. This time the walk is snowy. It reminds me of blow. Purest angel, sugar sprinkles. The longest nights of the year passed the shortest during that messy working holiday in 2019. Putrid smoggy summer, playing pool poorly, sinking the 8 ball, *first shot*, and puke.

I'm concretely cold and alone, walking away from town I'm hurling myself through the frigid darkness. Trying to keep my heart warm past the resort's golf course, like the bears nestled in their dens under the 18th green. The snow is heavy, strong as starch but it's still, silent and empty like what's inside a crystal. When the wind whips the side of my face, I see the blood vessels behind my eyes.

All to come here, to the resort's staff bar. To drink diet coke and listen to some jackass talk about Loblaw's supermarket chain, talk about running away, talk about sweeping chimneys in a past life. People curled up inside winter whiskey bars talk about everything they know but never about what they don't. Inside words for outside people. The grim Samaritans of good old unsolicited advice, and the worst thing is that I *participate!* I wish I could do what the forest does during those walks and shut the fuck up! The winter forest listens, it unplays, un-pretends to understand that it's okay to not be so careful and to be unprotected.

On the way home, in a snowy flash, I turn around into the chimney fog like the wimpy
curmudgeon I am and run backwards home to the beat of this haiku.

walk backwards poorly
but still moving forwardly
for eternity