

The background of the page is a photograph of a winter landscape. In the foreground, there are large, snow-covered icebergs with icicles hanging from their edges. A narrow path of open water or a thin layer of ice leads from the icebergs towards the background. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, suggesting an overcast day. In the distance, a line of trees and a small building are visible on a slight rise.

## Polar Vortex Monsters

Marilyn Zelke-Windau

Fogsteam rises.  
It hides the monsters  
of this deep lake.  
They wait  
to come ashore,  
to whip arms,  
to dance a frenzied  
polka cold, dotting  
the waves with  
snowsweat.

A solitary figure,  
parka-bundled,  
hand-gloved,  
mouth-scarved,  
head-hatted,  
walks the beach,  
the icehills.  
He visits icicle hangings,  
treads frozen plateaus  
in heavy moonboots.  
He doesn't know  
the danger.

The monsters await  
the sight of breath,  
of steam—  
their kindred essence.  
They see only his eyes,  
ovals encased  
in icedropped lashes.

They hurry to shore,  
as he hurries to car.  
A fast runner wins life,  
warmth, in a race  
against the polar vortex.

Original photo by John Sukowaty