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Snowballs flung hard and fast
zip past my unhatted-head exploding
against a light-brown telephone pole
mounted in thick, gray snow.
Two layers of thin t-shirts cling
to my wet waist and I never
believed my mom when she told me
wet hair could freeze
and would freeze.

On this not so special day, two sets of hands,
one big, one small, too lazy to hunt for gloves or mittens,
reddened in white snow and hard ice.
On this day not so special, two pairs of feet,
one small, one big, too-thinly socked,
became colder and colder until they were no longer there;
the shoes stayed, though,
you could still see the shoes.

And on his way towards me,
across the black street, the boy,
on a puddle of ice pretending to be water,
fell on his side and then on his face.
Seeing no movement, I tip-toed through icy water
and peered down at the boy in big, black boots
and a blue mountain goat coat.

Wondering what I should do next,
I stooped a little lower to see if I could see his breath.
His face was still and his brown eyes closed,
but his arms were alive and his hands were too
and I found that we were both on the ground,
the same level, for once,
and I could feel the unearthly coldness
of the pavement through my jeans
and I noticed a faint smile pull up his cheek.

Triumphant laughter flowed from him easily
and his hands grabbed hold of my belly and my sides.
Determined to keep back
that foolish and defeated laughter
I lost that battle too
and its fingers worked their way
between my lips and out it spilled
onto the winter asphalt full of holes
and it made us both feel good.

Squirming and wiggling and accidentally
kicking him I'm freed
by his own laughter
and down the broken,
uneven, frozen
and thawed sidewalk I run,
overwhelmed by the fear
of falling
and the awful exciting
idea of getting caught.

He's right behind me now,
but even closer is a
cloud of winter-time butterflies
that make their way into my
tummy pushing up
a laughter that
consumes me
from the inside out
and slows my retreat into a giddy, out-of-breat, jog-stumble-walk-stop.

I turn quickly with a flash
of fire in my eyes
and my predator
turns into my prey but
cement-rooted maples
and other trees I can't name get in our way.

Suddenly spinning he
picks me up and over
we fall soft and hard
into a black, brown, white and sometimes
green hillside speckled with trees and bushes we just missed.

As we lay, cold and hot, shivering and sweating,
our man and woman-made clouds
fog our view of the bright sky
and so we stare at each other instead.
And as I lay,
contemplating the brightness
of my yellow jacket against white snow,
he whispers in my ear many theories;
multiple ways we could become warm and dry
and I choose which one I like best.
For not, though, we smile
and snuggle our faces and our bodies
letting winter's coldness push us closer together.