

Sensory Inattention

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Snowflakes drifting
from a soundless sky
are startled
by the wail of an ambulance
piercing through the gap
left open just enough
to let in the winter chill.

I linger by the bathroom window
allowing the icy breeze
to arouse me
from my stupor.

It's been a long night
of breathing stale air
shared with the sick
and dying.

Oriented to place and time,
it's December 1989
the AIDS rotation is next.
Stories are told
it's a test
of who will leave and who
is staying.

I join my fellow
sleep-hungry interns
stalking the halls like ghosts
reacting to beeps and codes
oblivious to the sound
of an ambulance
and softly falling snow.