

Winters are the worst. They are often cold and grey and gloomy and inconvenient, making me waste hours on end indoors because of my apprehension of facing the biting atmosphere; most of all, though, they feel too long. The sunlight usually slinks beneath the horizon before you know it, and a sluggish urgency sets in. The undertones of the evening sky are often purple in New York City, but I find the evenings colored a deep navy blue more beautiful. Tonight was one of those navy blue evenings. At around 2:08 AM, I left the library with my laptop and papers and pens put away messily into my black leather tote, and when I set foot outside, the only thing that I noticed was that it was rather cold, but bearably so. I was walking with a friend, and we were having an in-depth conversation about the terror of vulnerability and misplaced confidentiality; jammed in between those moments was talk about boys and the strange nuances of sentimentality. On the corner of Amsterdam and 113th, we stopped for a moment because she was supposed to turn right and I was supposed to make a left. We were probably caught there for thirty minutes, my hands losing feeling as the wind swept our hair in different directions and the cold settled into the cracks of my skin. Though I was enjoying the conversation as it was cathartic in its own way, reminding me that perhaps, I was not as alone as I had once imagined, I remember thinking a couple of times that I wanted to go home, to get somewhere warm because I was losing feeling in both my cheeks and my fingertips. Suddenly, though, the wind died down to a breeze, and I began to notice that caught in between my friend's eyelashes and hair were tiny bits of white that would disappear after about fifteen seconds notice.

I zoned out for a brief moment then and looked at the immediate area surrounding her, and I found that it was snowing. Without really noticing that my lips had parted in the middle of something she was saying, I blurted out the words, "Is it snowing?" To which she made no noise, but turned her head to look at the spacious intersection of the two streets we were standing at. The wind was blowing something that looked like white dust, swirling it around in the middle of the black asphalt, and upon looking up, you could see that there were flurries of snow dancing in the breeze, illuminated by the valiant lamp posts that stood scarcely dotting the sidewalk. They seemed so light and so fragile that any attempt to touch them would have made them disappear instantly, as if they had never been there in the first place. Some ivory specks were bigger in size than others, and though they moved in fairly different directions, they all came down gently, unable to settle and collect on the concrete that glimmered beneath them. And in that moment, I felt that winter could be breathtaking, and I remembered something a boy I loved had once told me about winter, about how he loved the snow and that there was great beauty in the way snowflakes could assemble and congregate themselves on the thin surface of tree branches stripped bare by the frigid season, so pleasant and sweet-tempered. There is something incredibly visceral about the way gentle snow makes you feel; for me, it was indescribable in a way that was acceptable. For so much of my life, I

have been searching for the rationale and logic and answers to everything, with the answers always having to make sense, meaning that nothing could be left unexplained, but the way that those colorless snowflakes twisted themselves so individualistically in the air felt a bit like faith — it didn't have to make much sense, being beautiful simply because they were, — and just like that, within a few minutes of their original appearance, they had gone. Slowly, I turned my attention back to my friend, who had begun to speak again. I stood at that corner for roughly twenty-two more minutes, then I turned that left that I needed to take, walked the length of 113th, and headed indoors; during that time, the snow did not start falling again.

I still hate winters because of the way they turn my cheeks too red and because of the way they numb my lips, but Ben had a fair point: sometimes, they could be quite lovely.

Suggested Song: “Wash” by Bon Iver