

## WHITE AS SNOW

by

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I never wanted to have a piercing, but then here I am with a shiny bangle in my right ear. They shot me up with some primo smack, I’ll tell you that much, when sending me off into paranoia-land, to get the hole punched in my lobe. All in all, I’m pretty sure it’s not worth it to partake on a regular basis. More than a few of my fellow mountain-dwelling friends have been “disappeared” over nothing more than doing a little Dumpster diving for dinner. I tell you, it’s this network of pushers oddly trained in installing hipster silver studs that you have to watch out for. Chill out, whatever their foul purposes; after all, you’d be surprised what the swells toss out into the trash right after their so predictable “dinnertime”; I mean, you get burgers hardly touched by human mouths, truffle french fries, trout more tender than an angler ever pulled out of the Roaring Fork River, and believe you me, they’re some real honeys I’ve taken from that waterway. But the problem is, the fish are slim to none these days. We’d stay around our hovels in the high country if we could feed ourselves off berries and nuts and the like, but it’s hotter and hotter and dryer and dryer up there—the premature snowmelt is enough to wake you from a nice long, badly needed sleep-off-the-hangover. I’d stay away from flatlanders and their iconoclast cuisine if I had a choice other than to starve. When your campmate loses her newborn to malnutrition, it’s way past time to swallow your pride and stalk the alleyways for freshly forgotten food. The fact they seduce you in town with their drugs and sublimity before making the move on you, a terminal rapprochement, for not one of my band of gypsies has ever gotten the nebulous second piercing, a bangle for each ear. No, they’re taken away, who knows where, perhaps shot down in cold blood, that’s the rumor, but none of us have seen it with our own eyes.

The swells are too clever for that. So, now I'm out here at the landfill just on the outskirts of town, and there's rotten, maggot-ridden refuse to paw through for hours to get to an edible gingersnap or two, or a ripped-open bag of brown sugar; you know, something tasty and not poisoned by the toxic waste all around. There's really no other choice left for a meal. And I don't trust the landfill one bit: they have this white sort of camouflage all over the place. One of the guys working a bulldozer called it some weird-sounding name—"Styrofoam cup," I think it was, or something. To me it tastes—I only took one bite one time—well, it tastes like petrochemical snow that piles up out at the landfill, where, if you didn't know better, you'd swear it must always be below freezing because the damn stuff never seems to melt. What's a bear to do? At least I'm no slave to fashion, thank God, or there's no telling what would've already become of me. A gust of wind came up and blew one of the white cups into the air, and it wafted clear out of the dump. For no particular reason I followed it. Perhaps something in me ancient and knowing of snowfall is being twisted into another seduction. Nonetheless, I can't help but follow it as it tumbles and bounces over the field of scrub brush and mulberry trees without berries. I don't know where we'll end up. And I hardly care. Why is everybody running from me? Oh, my, there's the man with the gun that shoots you up with smack. I'm so tired of having to flee, so hungry, I stop following the rambling cup. I'm ready for another injection. This time the gun barrel lights up like a lightning bolt. And I'm split in two with white-hot pain. This is no pusher. This is a killer. The cup swirls back and sort of twirls like a dervish right before me. It makes me think of the high-mountain snowfall I awoke to all those years after hibernation, which is no more.

THE END