

## When the Earth is a Frozen Pond

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When the earth is a frozen pond,  
The sameness sends out smoke signals,  
As far as an earth satellite can see,  
It reflects the frozen face,  
Of every pond, lake and river,  
The huge rivers face the oceans,  
Cutting them off at the surface,  
The great tidal basins—glint, gleam,  
A dull mirror finish.  
New York stands,  
Frozen to all her gods.  
She stands a pillar of salt,  
Waiting for fiery holocaust.  
The Potomac,  
Looks so uninvited to some other past.  
The Chesapeake Bay,  
Remains only for itself;  
Full of bitter wind,

Salt sprayed—snow crowned.

Georgia, the Carolinas,

Are as cold as they can get—

“Frost kills,” they drawl.

The coal fires in Virginia,

Stream their dense, acrid smoke,

Straight South,

Hope the winds drop that load.

Florida,

Left out of the frozen ponds,

Is cold and friendless to bathers.

Miami,

Remains a city of strangers,

A strange animal,

Long fed by those sun-loving northerners,

Who are willing to pay any price,

To never again feel the first nervous pinches of cold bitter wind.

Reverse:

Here again The Big Chill refuses,

To be reflected in the waterways—

It lies in it.

It lies there as ice floes, ice pans, frozen solid—

Riverbank to riverbank,

'Till the sun wills itself unto the land,

Not a minute before,

Not a minute later.

Thrasher Falls New York, February 1, 1994

This was written in a sense of great loss that seemed to lie in the land and the water. While it is hard to articulate loss, one feels it profoundly in whatever form it comes.