

Noah Burke

8:00 a.m. section English 098

### Snow Era

The snow in Boston was layered like the sediment in the ground. It represented much shorter spans of time than the layers in the earth's crust, but still time nonetheless. I had been in Massachusetts for four days, and in that time there had been three new eras added to the now, in my mind, paleontologically significant layers of white precipitation. Today's "snow era" as Claire and me started to call them was my least favorite, and I hoped it wouldn't snow anymore so it would be the first one to melt. Its melting wouldn't get rid of the bad day, but would be a small and symbolic victory for myself. I walked behind Claire and took a picture of her head and showed it to her.

"Your hair looks like a reverse mountain," I said. "Instead of the black dots of skiers marking the white snow, there are white specks pock marking your black hair."

"That's stupid," she said.

"Yeah I guess it is."

For two and a half years Claire and me had been making our little pilgrimages to each other's cities to visit and spend time together. Sometimes lasting 2 days and sometimes lasting a month; the time never seemed to matter. Looking back on our relationship, there are much better times to be thought about, but for some reason an all around bad day is the one that makes me feel the most nostalgia.

The soft light bouncing off of the snow fell on Claire's soft but intense features. Certain light always seemed to get trapped in the boney structure of her face, casting sharp shadows across her cheeks.

"The duckboats in Philly killed someone I think, so I may never have to see one again," I said, focusing in on our mutual distaste for them. "I may never come visit you again just so I don't have to see the Boston versions. I'll be rid of them forever." This coaxed a rare smile out of her, one of the smiles that made her entire face wrinkle.

Sometimes it felt good to argue, but only when we were together in person. Little clashes that I knew would be resolved and would have no real affect on anything,; over what coffee shop we should go to or what tv show to watch. Today had been something different. Today we argued about each other and why we did things that were much more deep seated than coffee shop preference. Sometimes things like that still felt good, good in a different way but still nice. A reminder that even after hurting each other we would still be okay.

Today I thought that things would work themselves out, but I soon found at that they wouldn't. It started to snow again and I felt trapped, trapped in between the old snow and the new snow. Trapped in Boston and maybe even trapped in a relationship. We walked into a small book store and I thought about how our argument that would undoubtedly arise and how "Seinfeld" arguing in a bookstore would be, arguing in a whisper.

There in the bookstore I realized this would most likely be the last time I saw Claire. The home that I had found in another person would be foreclosed and I'd be kicked out, cold and confused.

For a second we forgot we were fighting and made fun of people who brag about reading *Infinite Jest*, then realized we were mad at each other again.

We left the store and walked towards the bus terminal. The snowflakes were huge and moved slowly but they still managed to seem alive. Claire's short, brown hair fell almost perfectly above her shoulders. I could feel her deep blue eyes looking at me from behind her sunglasses. I searched her face for some semblance of emotion but came away empty handed.

"The snow falling looks like sped up videos of crosswalks in Japan" I said to Claire. We hugged and I got on the almost empty megabus back to Philadelphia. The bus felt like the ultimate purgatory. Five hours to sit and digest the things we said to each other. The highway was mesmerizing and put me to sleep almost immediately and I stayed that way almost the entire ride home. I thought about texting Claire about how sleep was as close to time travel as we could get but knew that I wouldn't get a response.