

Winter Fragments

by [Kathleen O'Toole](#) in the [March 2026](#) issue
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I.

Into the sunlight I awaken,
into the dread. How to shelter
my heart from the hammering
voices?

How to heed
Rilke's call to *be your own*
shimmering vase—liquid roses,
your own *incomparable*
thread.

II.

A crescent moon lingers
in the sky at dawn. All
our sorrows, a string
of holiday lights refusing
to be extinguished long after
the feast. All our joys,
buried in an avalanche
of edicts stifling song.

III.

White silence descends. Snow
obliterates difference—our
cacophony. Only the tufted
titmouse and cardinal duet
break through.

May our souls
receive this missive: *sh-h-h*
from the universe. Listen for
a summons—what binds us.

IV.

Start with the stars' revelation:
their brilliance, our insignificance.
Breathe in the winter night's
chill, infused with the salt
of an imagined sea.