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“Snowman”, by Caroline Price

Snowman

Months later and I'm sitting alone
on the high terrace of the Hôtel du Sud
in July, another heat wave,
pavings on fire beneath the parasols
which the old lady, crossing from door
to door with the day's linen
comes over to adjust, tut-tutting
until I'm shaded more completely, ah, this climate! –

telling me how last winter
snow fell, a good twenty centimetres, and held –
and how her teenage grandson
built a snowman on the terrace right here
where I'm sitting now, a tall sturdy
bonhomme de neige who survived intact for four days
until the temperature remembered itself
and he began to collapse from the outside in,
his wide mouth slipping,
tears crawling down his furred cheeks –

it was the same SNOW!!!
you'd been amazed by, sending me instantly
the pictures you'd taken, capitalized, like a child's –
flakes crowding against the glass,
a southern sky falling apart
on a woman walking her dog in the road below
at night past a smudged lamp
and in the morning the surrounding mountains
covered – snow like time
(as you assured me it would) effacing everything.

Caroline Price

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