

HELEN MOORE

Ice, an Elegy

The Ice Queen is leaving –
all around, her ancient kingdom
is cracking up – trickling, splitting,
as her vast, crystal sleigh
grinds on the fast-track to oblivion.

For millennia she held her huge mirror
steady to the Sun; now she's losing her cool,
sheets shrinking, her albedo body
pocked with melting pools, moulins
milling in, chutes of water sailing her
the slipway of lost forever.

Yet each day her belly calves
desperate bergs of ice. Bereft, these tongues
curl and shrink as they sense their mother
spent – her skin once tinted blue,
now deathly pale.

Her courtiers and creatures
are disappearing too –
in despair they throw their arms into the air;
tall maidens
once yoked in lustrous bridal gowns,
stagger
one by one
to their knees,
faces crashing down
in mounds into the sea.

Even the glacial snow men,
who plucked boulders and carried
their erratic cargo across continents,
now stumble, retreat – valleys scoured
by their dark rheumatic wake.

Everywhere Foxes, Bears,
Wolverines and Leopards mourn their Queen –
prowling the rosaries of paternoster lakes,
they murmur eulogies and prayers.

And at last we hurry in
with tools, instruments and measuring rods
to probe, extend our senses –
to scientize this demise of ice.

