

## Chitose in February

*Nisha Cavendish*

had fell silent, interpolated  
with my shivers, breaths into my hands—  
the cold reminded me to buy gloves,  
and how I hadn't eaten since starting my cross-country trek.  
A-soon-to be blizzard ushered toward lodging,  
still, the smell of ramen lulled me from my path  
right to an old lady's home—  
a bottle of Sapporo Kirin, fried rice,  
chashu ramen, her smile despite me being a foreigner  
told me I wasn't alone in the snow country.  
The Queens Hotel was my respite,  
thermostat set to 75F, a view letting me gaze  
out at white that went on for miles;  
I thought I had craved that silence;

I'd roam the dead world at night,  
3am combini trips to scarf down 100 yen donuts—  
but one encounter rings through my mind  
of a child crying, cowering behind his mother  
just from the sight of me;  
My hotel room became a weekend prison afterwards,  
the city of white I had yet to fully explore off limits;  
I wondered if I was the one bringing the cold—  
Who wouldn't cling to warmth during a bitter Winter.