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Learning to play snooker at Emerald Lake

Snow hangs in the mountains, camped
in Field's deep fjord, in light
flatter than the valley bottom,
a grey so profound we cannot touch its depths.

The highways have closed ranks, Roger's Pass
impossible, the white metal of snow,
the arcing bridge above Golden's gorge a highwire,
steel girders bound
with ice, as frightening as the sky.
Only fools would drive that road.

You turn to me, your face like fissured stone,
and I see you know. You pick up
the rulebook and the cue stick,
the cobalt cube of chalk, ancient ice
in its teeth. We call

for brandy, and you break, the crystal

click of white on muted colour.

Their tiny fracture deafens me.

We play as the weather deepens, balls plunging

into ancient leather pockets,

winter racking up the best shots,

and we close all our roads

as cold settles between us,

and in the mountains' back throat.