

Exposure
For Teresa McGovern
By Joseph Briggs

During rough winters here in Madison
there are certain names mentioned
that always end up marrying silence soon after.

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They've come here full of ambition
and on some Saturday in December
they can't crack enough mirrors in their rented duplexes
so they slam doors & crunch their boots on five inches of snow
in order to drink whiskey at the Crystal Corner,
or the old Wisco, or someplace off Willy St.

Bartime comes and snow is tumbling again,
sugar-cube size this time.

Flakes are mixing with salts on their red faces
but they manage to find their way back to the East Side
like geese in spring thanks to green & red neon signs
of liquor stores and tattoo shops.

These bread crumbs lead the way not to beds
but backyards where prayers are recited,
cigarettes are lit, and socks finish up their task
of adhering to skin while blankets, two floors up,
are now becoming all accounted for.

These people are shivering in yards knee deep in snow
and they're not warning anyone about any one thing.

