



The Hill

He is the new boy at The Hill, a short walk-in-the-park overseeing the slow-moving Red River in downtown Winnipeg. He is a Two-Spirit with sharp cheekbones that radiate in a fiery red when shyly smiling with full pink lips, revealing a perfect set of teeth white as untarnished porcelain. Two long braids hang over his broad shoulders that extend onto a brawny frame draped in an acid-washed jean jacket, a general attire fitted to the fashion of 1988. He is seventeen, engorged with pubescent vitality, and this distinction gives him an advantage over the rest of the older boys at The Hill, as every car that cruises by stops before him before the others. It does take a lot of patience to be in forty below.

The boys are brave objects of lasciviousness and active nocturnal animals in the twilight in search of warm flesh on the street corners where they stand. They do not believe they are missed as others think of them as dead. They all died inside a long time ago. And as the snow slithers

with the rhythm of the wind across the desolate street that amasses with every minute on the frigid December night, they all wait for the next car to cruise by, to be picked up and be brought away into an empyrean world that does not exist for them and never will. The sundog of an iris-orange dawn appears, and they all pixelate into the morning sun, never to be seen again.

by Julian Edwards