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## Antarctica

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*Antarctica*

*Written upon the signing of a 1991 U.N.-sponsored treaty designed to preserve Antarctica as an "unclaimed continent."*

If my flat in Chicago is haunted, it's haunted  
by cabbages, and maybe by a woman  
whose husband held her head under the newly  
installed running water as punishment for burning  
dinner in 1920. It's haunted by the 20th century  
creeping in with its wire bones, its closed  
frontier, its bulbs and gramophones.

If there's the ghost of a frontier left,  
it's in Antarctica. Maybe the woman with soaking  
hair dreamed of pulling on her sweater  
and heading south past Patagonia to fields  
of white waves enchanted into an acropolis  
of ice, where she could crash into stillness,  
a caryatid in a landmass without memory  
barely brushed by the cabbage steam and the chapped  
red dishwasher hands of history.