ANGELA SORBY

*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 dishwater hands of history.

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