

A. E. Hines

A Moment More Perfect

After walking three miles,
abandoned to the cold
in my thin clothes,
having seen neighbor
help neighbor shovel
gravel beneath wheels,
after holding a stranger's hand
as we slid across the ice
to make it past other strangers' cars
which had themselves slid helplessly together,
blocking the way and making laughable
any hope for a tow,
our nomadic numbers grew—
we plodded through the slanted veil
in a single line down Burnside,
beneath the quiet fir trees caked in white,
where we found no taxis or *Ubers* or *Lyfts*,
no buses waiting at bus stops,
not even a burning streetlamp,
and so we walked on, dispersing in all directions
into the quiet, frozen darkness, until finally
I made it to my own front door,
where you were waiting on our stoop,
and wiped the little mounds of snow
from my shoulders and quivering head,
stripped me naked in our hallway,
and lowered me shivering
into the hot bath you had drawn—
a bottle of cabernet there to sip

behind the steamed windows
obscured by frost,
candles throwing playful shadows on the walls,
all warmth that I took greedily into myself
until my glass was empty,
the water cooled,
and the snow stopped falling.

