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## Polar Vortex

Laurie D. Morrisey

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## Polar Vortex

Far to the north, a whirling mass  
of arctic air sheds sheets of itself southward.

I pull my fingers out of their wool sheaths,  
curl them into my palms for warmth,

and follow your signature in the snow  
through the field, through a break

in the stone wall, where last summer  
a garter snake and her heaped-up hatchlings

lay on sunbaked leaves.  
Now they lie below, slow but awake.

I trudge onto the frozen lake,  
Thoreau's quiet parlor of fishes,

and stand as far as I can from any shore—  
while down below, the spotted turtle rests

beneath a blanket of mud, his heart  
beating once every eight frozen minutes.

*Laurie D. Morrissey*

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LAURIE D. MORRISSEY'S poems have appeared in *The Worcester Review*, *Poetry East*, *Blueline*, *Acorn*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *The Heron's Nest*, and many other journals. Her collection of haiku, *the slant of april snow*, was published by Red Moon Press (2019). She lives in New Hampshire and is a poetry editor at *The Worcester Review*.