

NEW LITERARY SOCIETY

3 / MARCH
2025



***CELEBRATING
OUR WRITERS***

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NEW LITERARY SOCIETY

THE CON TENT

CELEBRATING OUR WRITERS

MEET JEFF TURNER AND HIS AMAZING BOOKS

EXCITING NEW RELEASES

BEST OF WINTER WONDERS STORIES

BOOK PHOTOGRAPHY

FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

BOOK QR AND PURCHASE

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

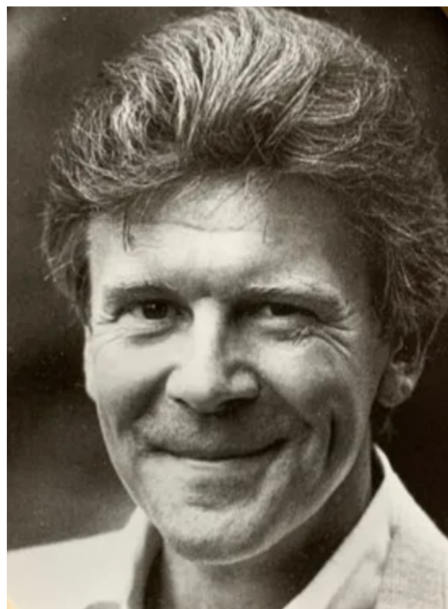
STAY TUNED FOR MORE EXCITING UPDATES!

ISSUE 3 – MARCH 2025

Meet Jeff Turner and His Amazing Books

A journey through his works and latest releases.

Meet Jeff Turner and His Amazing Books



Jeff Turner's diverse bibliography spans multiple genres, including non-fiction, memoir, philosophy, and literary fiction. His works explore themes such as faith and spirituality, human nature, memoir and personal storytelling, and adventure and historical fiction.

He has published 23 books and has been nominated for a variety of esteemed literary awards.

I invite you to dive into his articles, buy his books, and discover the worlds he has crafted.

Jeff Turner is a true dyed in the wool Connecticut Yankee. He was born and raised in Quaker Hill, Connecticut and attended public schools in Waterford before matriculating at three different Connecticut colleges and universities to earn his undergraduate and graduate degrees.

He taught for many years at Mitchell College in New London, a stone's throw from where he was born.

Dr. Turner is the author or co-author of over twenty academic books, widely used across the United States and abroad, as well as six novels, including *The Way Back*, *The Hero of Willow Creek*, *Lost Boys of the River Camp*, *The Choices He Made*, *A Rescued Soul*, and *The Horseman Who Came from the Sea*.

He is currently at work penning his seventh novel.

CELEBRATING OUR WRITERS

Meet Jeff Turner and His Amazing Books

In 2024 he received a bronze medal in the Readers Favorite award contest for his book *The Horseman Who Came from the Sea*.

"I've always been drawn to uplifting stories that inspire and make the reader feel optimistic at the end. The feel-good quality of my characters and storylines originates from positive traits I seek to embed, like kindness, compassion, and hope. There's too much hostility in the world today. I want to be remembered as an author who captured feel-good qualities in his stories and offered readers an alternative to negativity.

Forgiveness is the bedrock of character integrity I hope to achieve. Acquiring forgiveness is no easy chore, but it is important enough to intertwine its dynamics in several of my books. I paint a portrait of unforgiving souls refusing to let go, desperation often triggering resentment and anger. Those unable to forgive are usually portrayed as bitter, caustic, and biased.

I convey simple messages about overcoming the complexities of life on the way to achieving redemption and inner peace. This means accepting our loved ones just as they are, their gifts, beauty, flaws, and inner pain. In so doing, we discover what matters most."

— Jeff Turner: Author Interview

"Writings on humanity and forgiveness"

Published in Independent Books by Joel R. Dennstedt, September 23, 2024

CELEBRATING OUR WRITERS

Book Photography



Book Photography



Exciting New Releases by Our Writers

New books, new worlds—crafted with passion.

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

Secrets in the Lakes, by Sal Gallaher



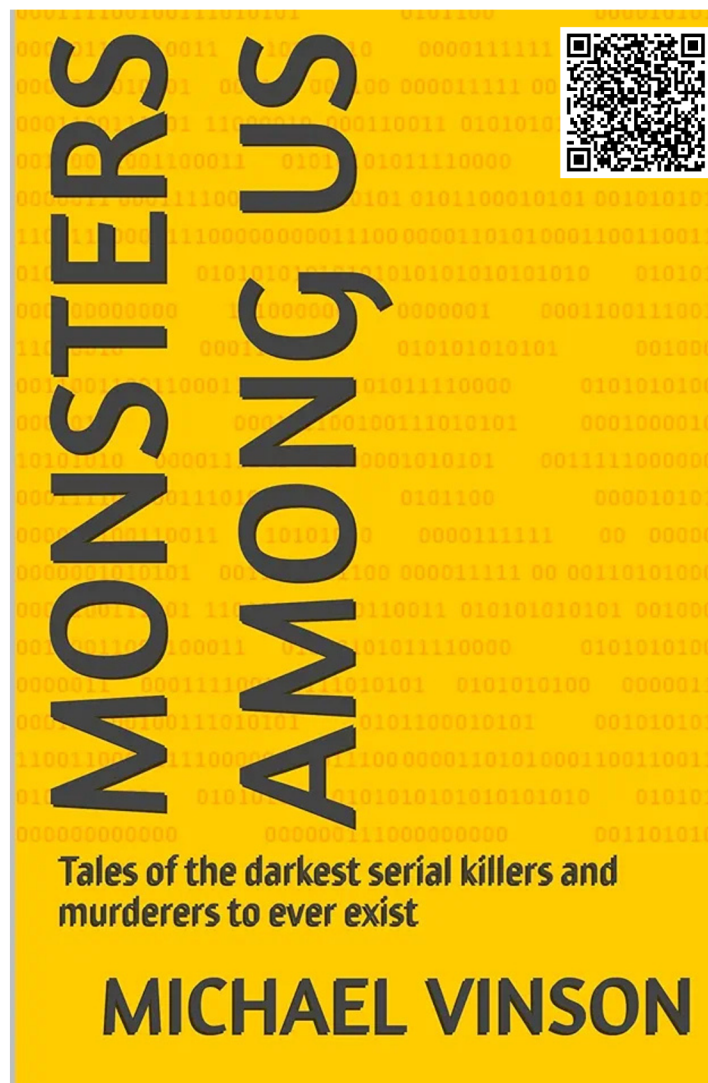
"It's official — I'm out. There's no retracting the words now. It's all over social media, and so many people have read it."

— **Sal Gallaher**

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

Monsters Among Us, by Michael Vinson



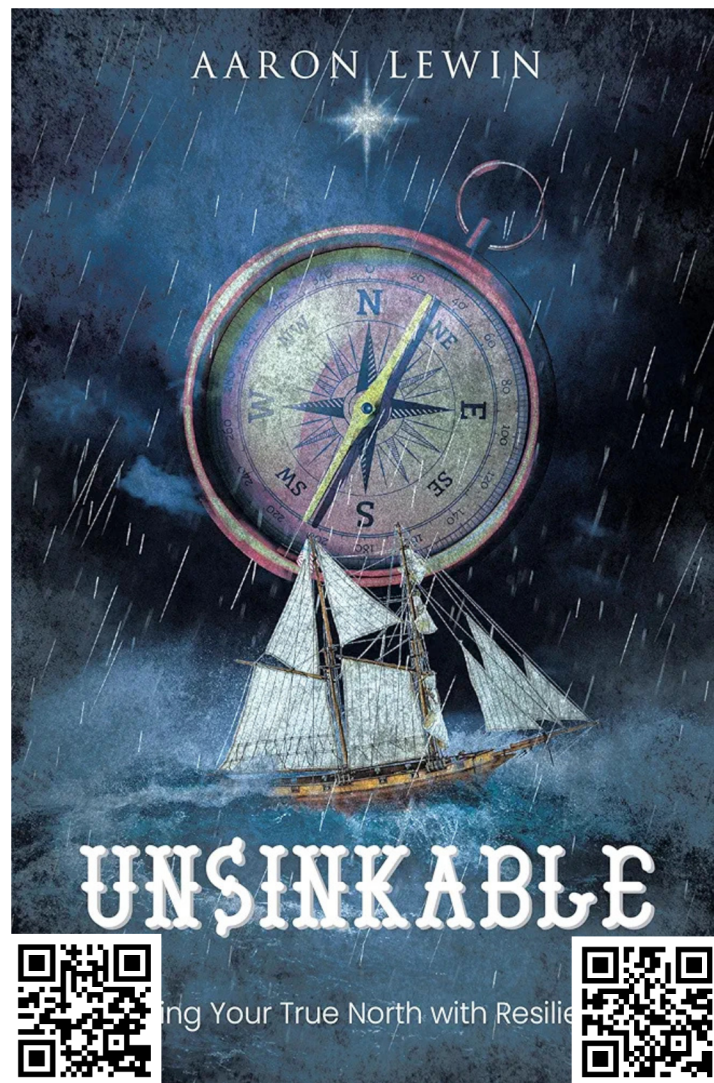
"Public reaction to Ramirez's crimes was intense, evoking a mix of horror, disgust, and fascination. The media sensationalized the story, often focusing on the gruesome details of the murders and the cannibalistic elements."

— **Michel Vinson**

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

Unsinkable, by Aaron Lewin



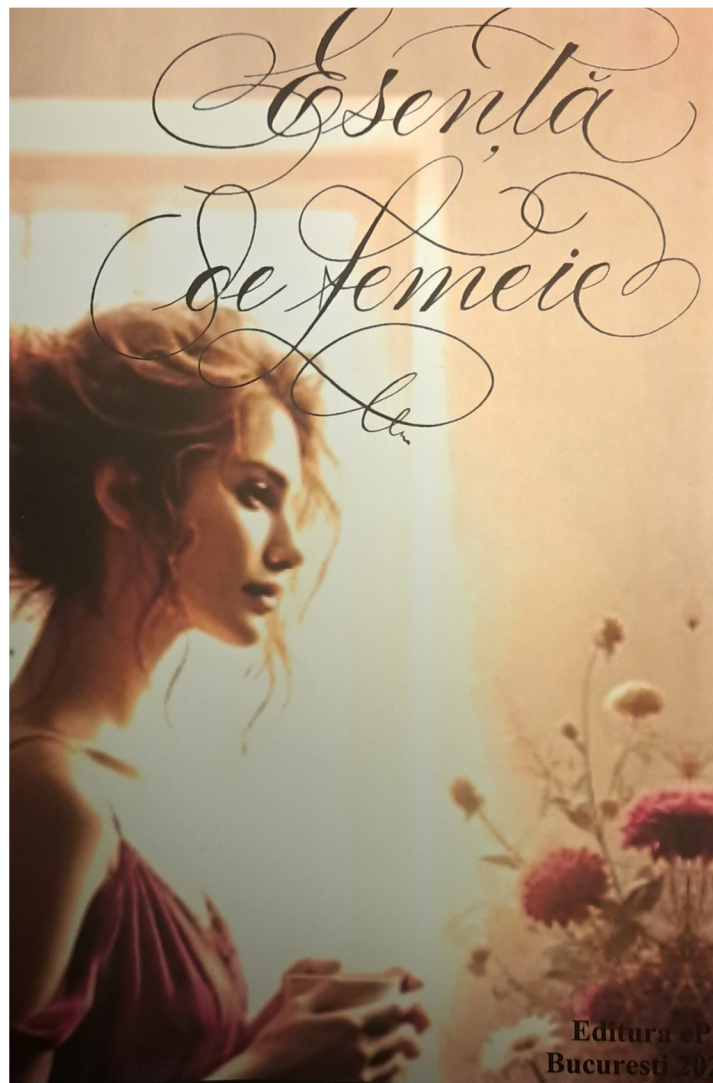
*"You can't change the direction of the wind, but you can adjust the sails
to always reach your destination."*

— Aaron Lewin

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

Poetic debut of Luna Popescu in the volume *Essence of a Woman*,
within the Atelier of the Lyrical Café



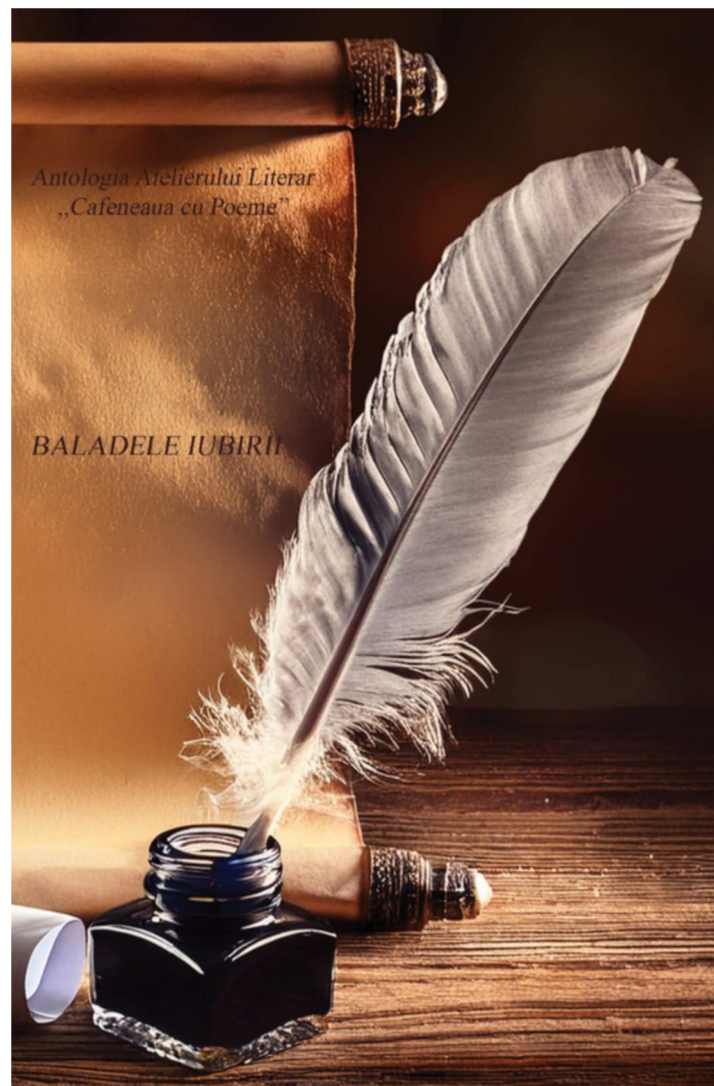
*"She has a heart of purest gold,
Whose melodies never cease to unfold."*

— **Luna Popescu**

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

Poetic debut of Luna Popescu in *Ballads of Love*, within the Literary Atelier: A Café with Poems.



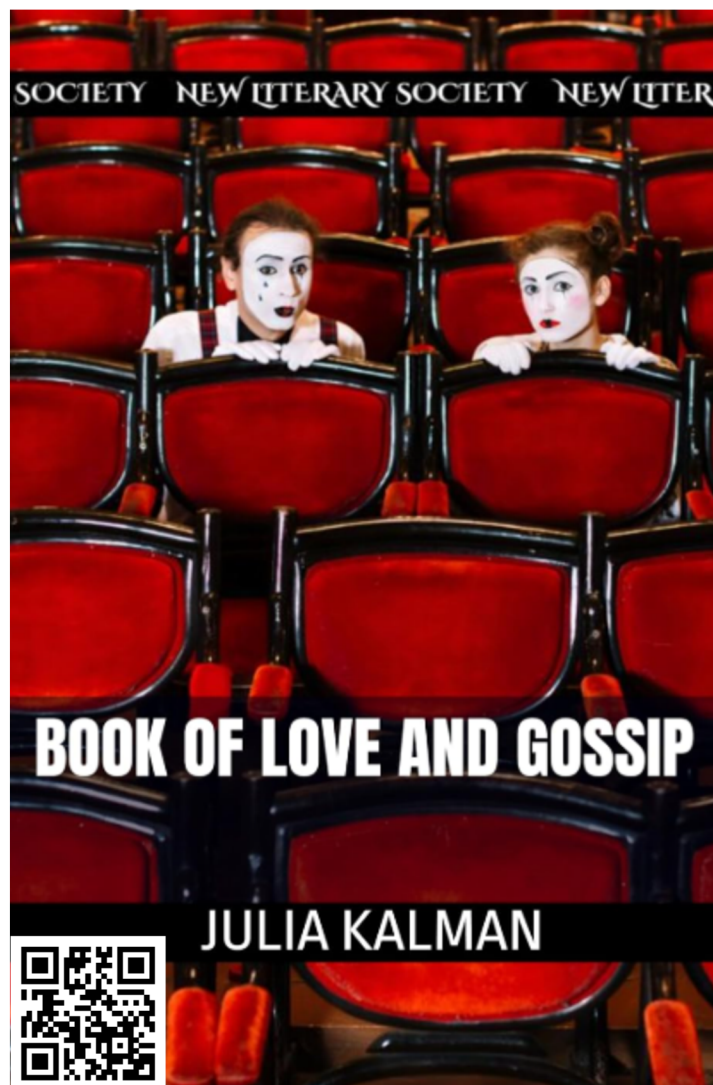
*“ From frozen stars, we fell to this Earth,
To keep a promise, through love's eternal birth.”*

— Luna Popescu

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

Book of Love and Gossip, by Julia Kalman



"This version of the book is the closest to me—I created the cover, selected the illustrations, and even translated it. It survived ten years of rewriting, public readings, and a pandemic."

—Julia Kalman

Portrait of the Author: Julia Kalman



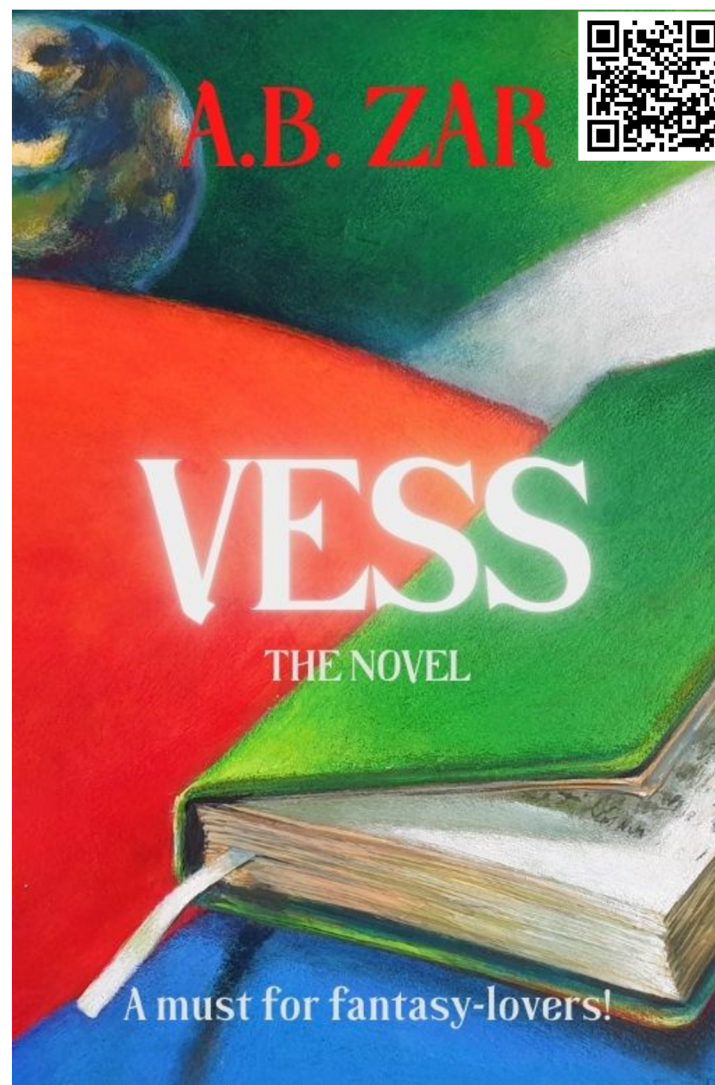
*"There's more of me in this book than I find in myself...
Honestly, writing it made me feel younger—or maybe Jungian(er)?
Reading it might do the same for you—but no promises..."*

— Julia Kalman

Exciting New Releases

The book photos are presented in chronological order of their publication.

VESS, by A.B. ZAR



"Publishing one's first book needs courage and an openness to criticism, which promotes growth and improvement."

—A.B. Zar

Portrait of the Author: A. B. Zar with VESS



<https://valiirinaciobanuart.com/>

"i eagerly anticipate your feedback on VESS, hoping it offers you joy and leaves you feeling empowered, energized, and possibly needing more."

— A.B. Zar

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

Stories that capture winter in our souls.

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

"Cold Comfort" – Dr. Paul Anderson

"Snowbound Memories" – Trish Church

"Snow Sisters: Daughters of Winter's Secret" – Nicole Cunha

"The Frost Between Us" – Sophia Chanu

"The Christmas Tree Ornament That Loved Hanukkah" – BlissFlip

"The Light" (From Book of Love and Gossip) – Julia Kalman

"Tara's Winter Homecoming" – Diana Raj Kumari

"A Spontaneous Winter Interlude" – Jan C. McLarty

"The Ice Queen" – Zizi Majid

"One Snowfall, Two Hearts" – Zoran Rogic

"Beneath the Snow" – Miguel Santiago

"Fading Footprints, Moving Ahead" – Grant Tate

"In the Shadow of the Matterhorn" – Grant Tate

"The Icy Embrace" – Mike Vinson

"My Best Winter: A Season of Magic & Memories" – James Edward Young

"Winter Portrait. At the Military Assessment Theater" – A.B. Zar

CELEBRATING OUR WRITERS

Fine Art Photography



"Centaur", by Dan Botezan

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

The authors are presented in alphabetical order to honor the diverse voices and talents.

Cold Comfort, By Dr Paul Anderson

She watches the others around the barbecue, cremating yet another unfortunate prawn. A sense of sadness overwhelms her.

Closing her eyes, memories of English Christmases from long ago come flooding back. Dark, cold, crunchy snow, big roaring fires, and a lavish festive spread on the table. Everyone cozy and warm in their jumpers and jeans.

Sitting around the pool in your swimmers to eat yet another barbecue dinner just doesn't seem right. A cozy dining room, all decked out with a real Christmas tree, ornaments, lights, and masses of tinsel seems so much better than trying to chill out around the pool whilst the sun toasts you to a nice shade of pink.

Yuck.

Surveying the scene around her, everyone seems busy, totally engrossed in their own little worlds. A thought comes to her, "They wouldn't miss me, would they?"

Slinking off into the house, she goes into the living room. A few decorations, lights, and an artificial Christmas tree try to add a festive feel to the room. Closing the blinds to the harsh reality of the Queensland summer and setting the aircon as cold as possible, everything starts to feel so much more civilized.

TV on, and straight to YouTube with a Christmas video of a car driving down a snow-covered road bordered with massive, snow-covered

CELEBRATING OUR WRITERS

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

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Cold Comfort, By Dr Paul Anderson

fir trees stretching off into the distance. The song “Driving Home for Christmas” blasts out at full volume.

Nipping out of the room, she returns wearing a winter jumper and carrying a fluffy blanket. Snuggling down on the sofa, she closes her eyes and imagines she is thousands of miles away, having a real Christmas.



Dr. Paul Anderson is a writer of fiction and nonfiction and editor of *A Little Book of Tall Stories* and *House Sitting*, blends dry humor with vivid sensory details. A retired Computer Science professor and consultant, his immersive style turns everyday moments into deeply relatable reflections on change, tradition, and belonging.
(Scan to explore his work)

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"Centaur", by Dan Botezan

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"Horse", by Dan Botezan

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

The authors are presented in alphabetical order to honor the diverse voices and talents.

Snowbound Memories, By Trish Church

When I moved from the frosty north to the sunlit south, I thought I'd left only snowdrifts and icy mornings behind. But as the first winter arrived without a single flake, I realized I'd lost something more profound—a connection to the quiet magic of snowfall.

Don't get me wrong, I don't miss shoveling snow at my age, and that's one of the reasons I moved after my husband passed. The other reason was living in a house with daily memories haunting me.

Each December begins a ritual: unboxing my old snow globe collection, each tied to a cherished memory of winter's past. Through these frozen worlds, I recall sledding with my siblings, my first snowball fight, and the way snow seemed to silence the world in the most comforting way. Then, there were all the ornaments for the tree my husband and I had collected together, each celebrating a moment in our lives. Decorating the tree was a trip down memory lane.

One day, a mysterious package arrives: a snow globe unlike any I own, filled with a swirling blizzard and a handwritten note—"The snow may be gone, but its magic is eternal." The sender remains anonymous, but the gift rekindles my determination to find ways to recreate that winter magic in my southern home, bringing me closer to new friends and cherished traditions.



Trish Church writes fiction, fantasy, and good humor. (Scan to explore her work)

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"Horse", by Dan Botezan

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

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Snow Sisters: Daughters of Winter's Secret, By Nicole Cunha

Snow crunched under their boots as the four sisters returned to their cabin, the smell of pine clinging to their clothes.

"Ivy, slow down!" Sophia whined, struggling to keep up.

"Move those tiny legs, Blondie," Ivy teased, flipping her long, jet-black hair over her shoulder. "Or I'll leave you to freeze."

Mira snorted. "Yeah, because that's how big sisters work. 'Survival of the fittest'—our totally normal family motto."

"Mom would love that," Elena muttered, rolling her eyes. The responsible one, as always.

But Mom wasn't there to scold them.

Instead, a single piece of velvet parchment lay on their worn wooden table, glistening in the candlelight.

Elena lifted it carefully. The golden ink shimmered as she read aloud: "It is time. Follow the wind and the ice. Your fate awaits you at the edge of winter."

Silence filled the room.

Ivy grabbed the letter. "Oh, great. Mom finally snapped. This has to be her idea of a test."

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Snow Sisters: Daughters of Winter's Secret, By Nicole Cunha

"Or she's been kidnapped by an evil snowman," Mira added, her brown curls bouncing as she gasped dramatically

Sophia's lip trembled. "What if something really bad happened?"

Elena exhaled. "We don't have a choice. We have to go."

And so they did.

The journey was brutal—icy winds howled, trees whispered secrets, and frost crept over the ground as if guiding them.

At the mountain's peak, a figure stood—a man with piercing silver eyes and a crown of ice.

"Finally," he said, his voice deep as a winter storm. "My daughters."

Sophia gasped. Mira's jaw dropped.

Ivy, ever herself, crossed her arms. "Seriously? You ditch us for years, and this is your grand entrance?"

Elena groaned. "Ivy!"

Their father smiled. "You are just as I imagined."

Snow swirled around them, glistening like shards in the frozen air.

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Snow Sisters: Daughters of Winter's Secret, By Nicole Cunha

"Their father's silver eyes gleamed as he stepped forward, arms outstretched.

"I know this is unexpected," he said, voice smooth as ice. "But I have watched over you from afar, waiting for the right time."

Elena hesitated, searching his face. "Why now?"

"Because you are ready." He gestured to the vast, snowy expanse. "Only one can inherit my power. But it must be earned."

Silence. The wind howled.

Ivy narrowed her eyes. "What do you mean, 'earned'?"

He smiled. "By proving yourselves. Only the strongest among you can take my place."

The words settled like a storm cloud. Mira's breath hitched. Sophia took a step back.

"You want us to fight each other?" Elena asked, fists clenching.

Their father tilted his head. "It is the way of winter."

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Snow Sisters: Daughters of Winter's Secret, By Nicole Cunha

Ivy scoffed.

"You're insane." Mira swallowed hard.

"He can't be serious."

"Oh, I am." His smile never wavered.

"You have until sunrise." He turned, vanishing into the swirling snow.

For a long moment, no one spoke. Sophia broke the silence.

"We're not really—"

"No," Elena said.

"We're not." Ivy's lips curled into a smirk.

"Then what do we do?" Elena met her gaze.

"We don't fight each other."

She turned to the mountain's peak, where their father had disappeared.
Mira caught on first.

"We fight him."

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Snow Sisters: Daughters of Winter's Secret, By Nicole Cunha

A slow grin spread across Ivy's face.

"Now that I can get behind."

Sophia wiped her tears. "Together?"

Elena nodded. "Together."

As the first light of dawn crept over the mountains, the four sisters marched forward—ready to take the throne for themselves.



Nicole Cunha is a diarist, fiction writer, and poet who explores the complexities of self-discovery, yearning, and the human experience. Her emotionally charged narratives often blend vulnerability with dark humor, capturing the bittersweet beauty of life's struggles. Explore her works on Medium. (Scan to explore her work)

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“The Tree of Life”, by Dan Botezan

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

The authors are presented in alphabetical order to honor the diverse voices and talents.

The Frost Between Us, By Sophia Chanu

The snow cloaked the small town in a soft, crystalline hush — the silence was absolute. Near the frozen lake just beyond the woods, Lucille stood, waiting.

She sensed his presence before she even turned.

“Oh, you are back,” she said softly, hearing the crunch of footsteps behind her.

“I am sorry, Lucille,” Jules replied, his voice a whisper.

They hadn’t spoken for years, not since that December night when his cheating had cracked their relationship like brittle glass.

“I never loved her, Lucille,” Jules finally admitted, his breath curling in the air. “I — ”

A soft creak interrupted him, the ice beneath Lucille’s feet groaning ominously.

But instead of fear, she stepped forward, gracefully gliding onto the lake’s centre. Jules gasped, reaching out to stop her.

Her figure shimmered faintly in the distance. “Don’t worry,” she whispered, her voice floating in the wind. “I’ve been here for a long time.”

Her figure rose from the lake again, smiling softly at him,

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The Frost Between Us, By Sophia Chanu

"Do you know, Jules, that night you left, I couldn't bear the emptiness any longer, and it was easy to just disappear within the depths of this lake?"

Jules, with sweat pouring down his face, heart palpitating with fear, gasped, "But that letter Lucille, I received that letter from you to meet here on this day, at this time!"

"I posted it before I entered the depths of this lake. I dabbled in the black arts, and I knew I could walk again one more time."

Her ghostly smile played on her lips.

"Adieu, Jules", she smiled at him.

"I am sorry, Lucille, I loved you. But she seduced me, and I thought it was her I really wanted; I was wrong," he stammered as he got nearer and nearer the lake's edge,

One more step... and the waters rushed to welcome him into its fold.



Sophia Chanu, Author of *Feelings* (2001), Poetry, *Love & Life* (short stories), teacher, dreamer, writer, singer. (Scan to explore her work)

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“Whispers of a Captive Unicorn”, by Dan Botezan

Fine Art Photography



"Horse", by Dan Botezan

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

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The Christmas Tree Ornament That Loved Hanukkah, **By BlissFlip**

Once upon a frosty December, nestled high on a Christmas tree in a cozy living room, there hung a small ornament, a shimmering silver dreidel. It had been carefully crafted, with bright colors twirling around its edges. The ornament wasn't your average Christmas decoration. It loved Hanukkah just as much as it loved Christmas, and it carried that love with every spin.

"Pa rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum," the carols played in the background as the tree glistened under the soft glow of the lights. The ornament twirled happily, spinning on its hook, as the sound of a drum filled the air. It had always admired the vibrant colors of the menorah, the flickering candles, the laughter of friends and family gathered for the holiday. It wasn't just about gifts or festive meals — there was a warmth in the air, a light that came from the heart of both Hanukkah and Christmas.

As the days went by, the dreidel would gently spin, gazing at the lights on the tree. Sometimes, a curious child would notice it, reaching up to touch it, giggling as the dreidel spun in their fingers. They would ask, "Why is there a dreidel on the Christmas tree?"

The ornament would smile inside and think Because we all have room in our hearts for both holidays.

Each year, the ornament cherished the unity between the seasons. The Christmas tree sparkled with the glow of both joy and tradition,

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The Christmas Tree Ornament That Loved Hanukkah, By BlissFlip

and with every spin, the dreidel whispered a secret melody: that love, peace, and light could shine brightly in every season, whether it was Christmas or Hanukkah.

And so, the little ornament continued to spin, living happily in a world of togetherness, where both Hanukkah and Christmas were celebrated with love.



BlissFlip writes fiction and fantasy, and creates games. Explore more of his work on Medium and Ko-Fi. (Scan to explore his work)

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"Unicorn", by Dan Botezan

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“ Luminous Sphere”, by Dan Botezan

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The Light, By Julia Kalman

Throughout my childhood, I slept guarded by a candle-smudged icon, which I could hardly decipher. In fact, the wood presented to the sight some reddish-brown spots, golden flashes here and there, and many dark shadows, as if the Light had penetrated from the other world to here, to purify the holy wood.

I liked to believe that it took care of me, and that's exactly how it was. First, no one died under it, to my knowledge, which was a true feat for an icon over a hundred years old. And then, whenever I had any suffering or uncertainty, it made its presence felt.

About a year ago, the roof broke, and the attic filled with ice floes, which suddenly melted, pouring into my room.

At that moment, I was caught in an embrace with my lover.

The ceiling light bulb flickered before shattering with a deafening noise. In the meantime, the apartment had filled with filth, and water continued to trickle down the walls. The downpour persisted for two nights and a day. We labored, carrying buckets of sludge and unsure of what to do with ourselves, until the ceiling cracked in one corner, right above the icon.

As the storm seemed to calm down, we fell asleep, embraced, on our couch. Towards morning – silence. The next day, birds chirped, closer than ever. Through the crack in the ceiling, the sun was rising. I looked at the icon in astonishment, especially since it seemed to be shining in that light. At the beginning of spring, I left the icon in the care of a restorer who

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The Light, By Julia Kalman

couldn't tell me anything more about it than I already knew, namely that it was old, but not very old, it seemed rotten and somewhat burned by the candle flame. The man added that the age of an icon does not matter because many are ugly or have compromised painting.

A few months later, I sought out the restorer, asking him not to alter the original painting because I wanted to preserve the original. The man was difficult to persuade, making me wonder—had he sold it?

I only calmed down when I saw the work on the drawing board.

A gallant scene emerged from under the smoke, painted long ago by an unknown artist on a worn piece of wood.

There were two, even three pairs of young people. Two of the boys were bowing at the ladies' feet.

A lot of love there and a lot of Light here. I told myself that the icon was incarnated from faith, from the candle, from love, and that, for the same reasons, one day it left.



Julia Kalman, writer, literary translator, and editor, has published four personal books and numerous translations. Her short story collection, *Book of Love and Gossip*, is now available on Amazon. (Scan to explore her work.)

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"Unicorn", by Dan Botezan

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Dan Botezan
Artwork
Shrine

"Bollywood", by Dan Botezan

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Tara's Winter Homecoming, By Diana Raj Kumari

Tara Mehra, the 24-year-old IAS* officer stood before the majestic Monastery in a daze. The winter breeze from the snow-capped mountains whispered and engulfed her. It was chilly but she felt a strange familiarity — a sensation lingering since childhood.

Tara at 24, had cracked the UPSC* exams. After undergoing training at the Academy, she was assigned to Arunachal Pradesh.

Once she reached Arunachal, she explored wherever her duty as the new Sub-Divisional Officer of Tawang took her — the fiery hues of India's first sunrise at Dong Valley, Sangetsar Lake's serene beauty, and the warmth of the people. Her duties kept her busy, yet the dreams tugged at her soul...

For years, she had frequent dreams of a golden monastery cloaked in snow, its prayer wheels spinning under her touch. These fleeting visions faded each morning but returned now, vivid and emphatic.

One snowy morning, her duty led her to the Tawang Monastery. Her heart raced — it was the monastery from her dreams. As if in a trance, she ascended the steps, her fingers brushing the prayer wheels. The chants of monks echoed like a forgotten lullaby.

Suddenly, a senior monk stood before her, his gaze filled with recognition. "Welcome home, Tara," he said gently.

Confused, she listened to her story unfold. Abandoned as a baby on a

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Tara's Winter Homecoming, By Diana Raj Kumari

a frigid night, she had been cared for at this monastery. Arun & Nisha Mehra, a visiting couple from Delhi, had adopted her. After their tragic accident, Arun's sister, Kiran, raised Tara, never revealing her origins.

Tears welled in her eyes as she looked up towards the sky and vowed to dedicate her life to its people — the land that had cradled her as a child.

The snowy winter of Arunachal Pradesh embraced her as the winter's mystery became her guiding star.



Diana Raj Kumari is a writer of both fiction and nonfiction, whose work eloquently explores themes of identity, personal discovery, and the natural world. Her writing reflects a profound connection to biology, with a particular focus on the intricate beauty of birds and flowers. Through poetic imagery, she brings these elements to life, seamlessly blending them with her exploration of deeper human experiences. Rooted in her Indian heritage, her stories offer cultural depth, combining realistic beauty with timeless wisdom. (Scan to explore her work)

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"Himera", by Dan Botezan

Fine Art Photography



"Golden Fish", by Dan Botezan

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A Spontaneous Winter Interlude, By Jan C. McLarty

On an ardent and fragrant day, the sun coy behind an unruly shroud of lively clouds, Amber ambled along her favorite path. Miika, the white falcon, her companion, flew just above her as they ventured toward a verdurous woodland.

“Miika!” Amber gasped in a hushed tone, “Did you see that? Did you see a person appear and vanish into a blip in the air?”

Miika gave her affirmative as she descended to clutch the gauntlet on Amber’s arm. Miika nudged Amber and conveyed the thought: *it’s a portal in the web of realities—let’s see if we can follow!*

They approached the swale where the appearance occurred, noticing the air above it shimmering. Miika caught Amber’s attention and winked.

Let’s go! Miika conveyed.

Amber stepped into the shimmer and instantly found herself in a wintry wonderland—a parallel reality.

But where was Miika?

Amber no longer wore a gauntlet, and no falcon was in sight. Instead, Amber’s apparel was an elegant, warm cloak, and nearby, looking at her intently, was a magnificent white reindeer.

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A Spontaneous Winter Interlude, By Jan C. McLarty

Gazing at the reindeer as it cocked its head and blinked, Amber was both stunned and jubilant, realizing this was Miika in a new manifestation. “Do I look different too?” Amber asked and was assured by Miika that she was the same except for her luxurious garments.

Miika came close and urged Amber to mount up so they could explore. She did and was elated as Miika took off swiftly toward a hilltop. The snow, falling lightly, tingled exquisitely on her face.

From the hilltop, they gazed upon a glimmering castle. At that moment, the air before them quivered as a gallant young man appeared, introducing himself as Prince Charming.

“Nice to meet you—but poor timing,” sighed Amber. “We’re off on a gloriously grand adventure!”

One more step... and the waters rushed to welcome him into its fold.



Jan C. McLarty, Artist and writer integrating art with mindfulness—offering fun perspectives on the journey from unknowing limiting mindsets to deeper knowing. Explore more of their work on Medium. (Scan to explore her work)

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"Unicorn", by Dan Botezan

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"Unicorn", by Dan Botezan

Best of Winter Wonders Stories

The authors are presented in alphabetical order to honor the diverse voices and talents.

The Ice Queen, By Zizi Majid

She felt cold, colder than ice.

It had started snowing lightly, but the ferocious winds and the freezing temperatures made me shiver. Looking around I was emotional. Last visit to mom's house before it sold. I called for Sweetie, but she was nowhere to be found. Cold air drafts through the half-open door, did she venture out? "Sweetie, time to go, come, let's go." Nothing. Where was she? The next house was a quarter mile away. I started walking towards the house. It wasn't easy, heavy snow and the wind were blinding. I regretted not being careful about shutting the door. Sweetie was like a second child to my mom.

Looking out the window, she had a distant icy look. She didn't mind the snowstorm, it reminded her of her life, cold and tumultuous. She had learned to live alone and weather the storms of her life. Stories were spread about her, how heartless she was so no one bothered with her. She heard a noise outside the front door, hesitantly opened it and to her surprise, a cold wet dog stood wagging its tail, looking up at her. Something tugged at her icy heart. "Come in, let me take care of you." It felt good to have another life in the lonely, dark house, and the dog wouldn't hurt her like people did.

Was she imagining, did she hear someone?

"Sweetie," a man's voice.

Was he looking for the dog?

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The Ice Queen, By Zizi Majid

Who was now dry and comfortable.

Alert, its tail wagging, ears perked, she knew this was Sweetie. She pretended she didn't hear, but there was a loud knock on the door.

"Is anyone there? I'm looking for my dog."

He kept knocking trying to peer through the small glass on the door.

"Go away," she said.

The familiar voice shocked him.



Zizi Majid, a beloved writer of memoir, fiction, and nonfiction, whose journey of personal resilience and spiritual growth has transformed her pain into powerful, passionate stories. With a background in managing a MedSpa and bridal boutique, and years of caring for loved ones facing life's toughest challenges, Zizi weaves her experiences into writing that blends emotional depth with life lessons on health, beauty, and the interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual. Explore her works on the Medium platform, where her writing resonates deeply with readers. (Scan to explore her work)

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One Snowfall, Two Hearts, By Zoran Rogic

The First Snow (Her Story)

I wasn't sure why I came back to the park tonight. Maybe it was the snow. It always feels like it erases everything — every mistake, every goodbye. Like it could bury the ache that's been clawing at me for months.

The world's gone quiet now. Just me, the snow, and this stupid bench where we used to sit. I don't even know if he'll show up. Maybe he's moved on. Maybe I should have too. But I can't. I keep hearing his laugh in my head, seeing the way his eyes lit up when he looked at me. God, I miss that. I miss *him*.

I pull my scarf tighter, but it doesn't help. The cold is everywhere — inside my chest, in my veins. It's worse now because I know what warmth felt like. I had it, and I lost it. No one tells you how much it hurts to lose something that felt like it was yours forever.

Footsteps crunch behind me. My heart leaps, but I don't turn. I can't. If it's not him, I'll shatter.

"Hey." His voice. Low, familiar, *him*.

I whip around, and there he is, standing in the falling snow, his breath fogging in the air. His coat's unbuttoned like he doesn't feel the cold. He always was like that — reckless, impossible.

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One Snowfall, Two Hearts, By Zoran Rogic

"You came," I say, and it's barely a whisper.

His eyes meet mine, soft and searching, and I feel the weight I've been carrying start to melt. "Of course, I came. I never stopped..."

He doesn't finish, but he doesn't have to. I hear everything he can't say.

The snow keeps falling, but I don't feel the cold anymore. Not when he steps closer, his hand brushing mine.

"I'm here," he says, and for the first time in months, I believe it.

The First Snow (His Story)

I almost didn't come. Standing at the edge of the park, my boots crunching in the snow, I wondered if it was too late. If she'd even want to see me.

God, I've been a coward. I let silence grow between us, weeks into months, thinking it was better to stay away than admit I was scared. Scared of failing her. Of not being enough. I thought I was protecting her, but really, I was just hiding.

But then the snow started falling tonight. It's funny, she always said

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One Snowfall, Two Hearts, By Zoran Rogic

the first snow felt like a promise. I don't know why, but I thought of her smile, the way her eyes would soften at the sight of it. That's when I knew I couldn't stay away any longer.

I see her now, sitting on the bench, and my chest tightens. She looks so small, wrapped in that scarf I bought her last year.

I almost turn around, afraid I'll make it worse. But the snow keeps falling, and something pulls me forward.

"Hey," I say, my voice catching in the cold air.

She spins around, her eyes wide, and for a second, I can't breathe.

"You came," she whispers.

I step closer, brushing her hand with mine. She doesn't pull away. Her warmth seeps into me — this is where I'm supposed to be.

"I'm here," I say, and for the first time in months, it feels like I am.



Zoran Rogic has authored numerous book, available on Amazon. (Scan to explore his work)

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"Pegasus", by Dan Botezan

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Beneath the Snow, By Miguel Santiago

In the voids of frozen silence,
Where breath hangs like a specter in the crisp air,
Our minds forge wicked fantasies,
Silence whispers dark gossip beneath the facade of quiet contemplation.
Snow blankets the world of decay, a shroud for hidden intentions,
Sparkling purity mocking the disarray within,
Where outrageous thoughts spin like wild swirls,
Unthinkable dreams dance on the edges of sanity.
What is unseen, unspeakable, becomes a vivid scenery,
Lurking under the frail pretense of civility,
As icy winds dare to strip away warmth,
Leaving only chill and unsaid sins to feast upon.
Snowflake falls onto innocent descent,
Yet on the ground, they forge a deceptive landscape,

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Beneath the Snow, By Miguel Santiago

Where minds unravel, threads of sanity pulled firmly,
Frayed by the tempting chill of devilish reckoning.
Winter's grip tightens, refusing to let go,
Casting a glaze over eyes that see only despair,
The quiet monstrous worlds rage, unseen,
Crafted in the cold architectures of the mind.
All is laid bare in the snow's harsh light,
Frozen in fleeting clarity, of our darkest depths of thoughts,
Carried away by the endless winter wind.



Miguel Santiago is writer of fiction, poetry, and editor of New Literary Society E-Magazine. Known for his dystopian and fantasy works. (Scan to explore his work.)

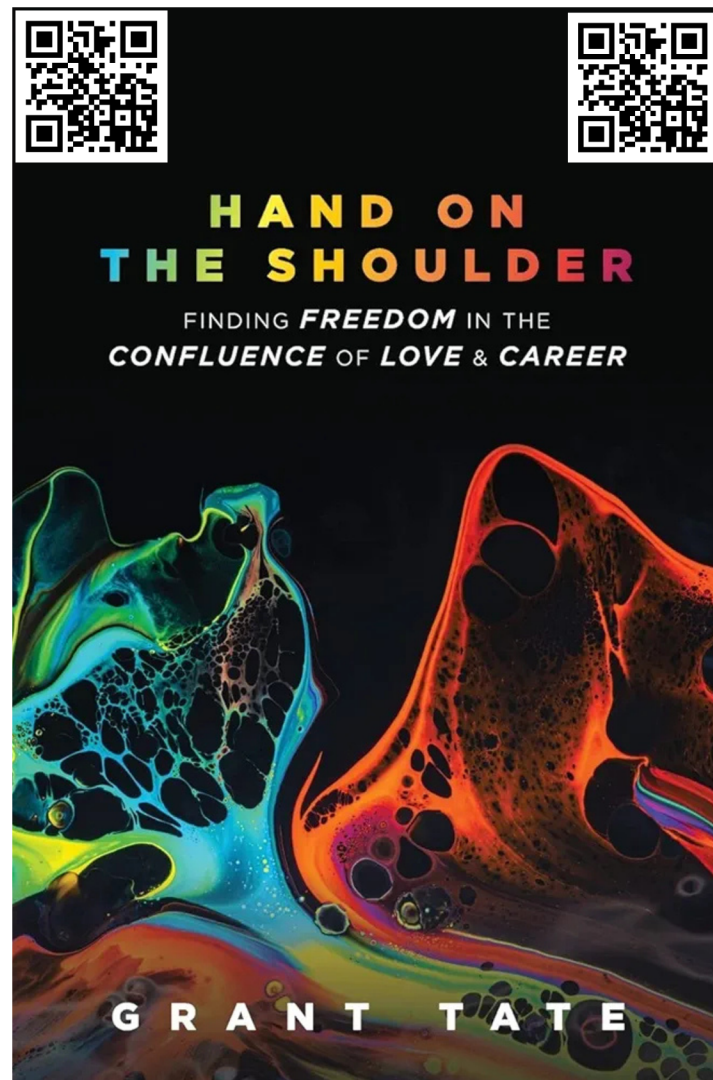
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Fading Footprints, Moving Ahead, By Grant Tate

The snow, big, wet flakes, started just as the train pulled out of Gare du Nord. I leaned back in my seat, perusing the train tickets in my hand. Seven countries, seven companies, and one objective: figure out if anyone still cared about our training programs.

The feedback that triggered this trip was not good.

The snow got heavier as I made my way through stop after stop. Brussels, Cologne, Amsterdam — all the same story. Smiling faces, handshakes, and polite explanations. “We’ve restructured.” “We’re using new methods.” “We’re trying something more modern.” The message was clear: “We don’t need you anymore.”

By the time I reached Edinburgh, I was beat. After a sleepless night, I stood the cold station platform, half-frozen fingers wrapped around a hot cup of coffee. Snow flurries swirled, making me wonder if it would ever stop. The train came, wheels grinding on frozen tracks, and I climbed aboard, settling in for a warm place to nap.

But, thirty minutes out, the frosty Scottish landscape captured my gaze. A man, alone, walking halfway up a steep hillside across the field, his dark coat flapping in the wind. He was slowly trudging through the snow with a walking stick poking the way. Every few steps, he’d turn to look behind as if checking the trail. But footprints were ephemeral in the swirling snow.

I wondered if he knew that.

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Fading Footprints, Moving Ahead, By Grant Tate

Hours later, at the Cock Inn, I met my colleague Soren by the fire. Molten logs crackled, and the smell of a full English breakfast with sizzling bacon and eggs filled the air. It felt good to be warm again.

"How'd it go?" I asked, already knowing the answer.

"Same as you," he said. "They've moved on."

We sat quietly for a while, watching the fire.

"What do we tell Bill?" Soren asked, anxiously looking at me.

I thought of that man on the hill, walking his path in the storm. No trail behind him, only forward.

"Tell him to shut it down," I said, taking a deep breath. "It's time to move on."

Soren nodded. No argument.

Sometimes, you climb a hill knowing the wind is too strong, and the trail behind you is already gone.

You keep walking.

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In the Shadow of the Matterhorn, By Grant Tate

The gondola clanked and swayed as it carried us up the mountain, sending chills through my height-fearing body. Through the frosty windows, the Matterhorn stood like a lord of the winter — an imposing lord saying “You’d better get this right or I will swallow you up.” The snow was vast — but soft, white, and glittering in the sun, beckoning me, a so-so skier, to risk a run down the mountain.

At the top, I took a deep breath of icy air, tightened my boots, and pushed off. The first stretch was glorious. I swished back and forth, carving the slope, growing more confident. Then I hit a narrow channel between two towering rock walls. No big deal — just another challenge on the way down.

At the end of the channel, I spotted what looked like a small ledge. I figured I’d hop over it, land in some powdery snow, and keep going. But nope. I sailed off that ten-foot ledge, flailing in the air, and landed spread eagle in a massive snowdrift.

The good news? I was still upright. The bad news? I was buried up to my armpits, shocked but safe. Fearing the next skier would fly over the ledge and land on me, I started twisting and turning, trying to free my skis. My left one wouldn’t budge. Something was pinning it down.

So I pulled. And tugged. And finally, up came...a ski pole.

But it wasn’t mine.

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In the Shadow of the Matterhorn, By Grant Tate

“What the heck,” I muttered. Shifting a little, I noticed something else poking through the snow. A red hat.

My stomach flipped. I started digging, throwing snow left and right until I hit something solid. Something horrifying.

A face. Frozen. Staring blankly through half-closed eyes.

I heaved and scrambled back, my heart pounding like a drum. I fumbled for my phone — no signal. Just me, the body, and the wind whistling through the mountains.

Whiffs of snow swirled around my face, propelled by an eerie wind, as if the mountain was trying to keep its secret.

And here I was, buried up to my neck in a mystery.



Grant Tate is a writer of fiction, and nonfiction, drawn to the intersections of change, identity, and the human journey. An author of numerous books, he is also a former IBM executive, business consultant, and educator who has spent his life navigating transformation. His storytelling blends keen observation with a deep sense of purpose, exploring themes of resilience, discovery, and the search for meaning. (Scan to explore his work.)

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"Cerberus", by Dan Botezan

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“Golden Fish”, by Dan Botezan

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The Icy Embrace, By Mike Vinson

I ran through the woods, the snow crunching beneath my pounding feet, my heart racing with pure terror. The bitter wind stung my face as I darted between the towering trees, desperate to escape the relentless pursuit.

They were after me, the cold-blooded hunters, their eyes filled with a malicious hunger. I had made the mistake of wandering too deep into these cursed woods, and now I was paying the price. The locals had warned me, and pleaded with me to stay away, but my curiosity had gotten the better of me.

As I ran, the shadows seemed to close in, the darkness consuming me. I could hear the footsteps behind me, the heavy breathing of my pursuers, their determination fueling their every step. Panic gripped me, and I pushed myself harder, my lungs burning with each ragged breath. Suddenly, a sharp pain tore through my leg, and I cried out, stumbling to the ground. I looked down to see the hilt of a knife protruding from my thigh, blood seeping through the fabric of my pants. I clutched the wound, trying in vain to stem the flow, but the damage was done.

Suddenly, a sharp pain tore through my leg, and I cried out, stumbling to the ground. I looked down to see the hilt of a knife protruding from my thigh, blood seeping through the fabric of my pants. I clutched the wound, trying in vain to stem the flow, but the damage was done.

The hunters were upon me instantly, their faces hidden by the shadows, their eyes glinting with a twisted sense of triumph. I tried to crawl away,

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The Icy Embrace, By Mike Vinson

to escape their clutches, but they were relentless, their hands grasping at my clothes, their fingers digging into my flesh.

The blade plunged into my body again, and again, and I screamed, the sound echoing through the silent woods. The pain was excruciating, and I thrashed and fought, but my strength was fading, the life draining from me with each passing moment.

As I lay there, gasping for breath, I managed to put my back up against a tree and stumble with my hand in my shirt pocket trying to find my lighter and what was left of a blunt I smoked earlier. though I was breathing hard I managed to inhale and to look around that's when I found myself mesmerized by the beauty that surrounded me. The icicles that hung from the branches sparkled like diamonds, their sharp edges glittering in the moonlight. Snowflakes danced in the air, each one a unique and intricate work of art.

The world seemed to slow down, and I watched in awe as the crimson stain on the snow spread, the color a stark contrast to the purity of the white.

The pain faded, replaced by a sense of calm, and I realized that in the end, even the most brutal of acts could not diminish the beauty of the natural world.

The hunters' faces were a blur, their features obscured by the shadows, but I no longer cared. I was mesmerized by the icy beauty that surrounded me, the cold embrace of the snow soothing my weary body.

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The Icy Embrace, By Mike Vinson

As the darkness closed in, I found solace in the knowledge that my final moments would be spent in the midst of this winter wonderland. The icicles, the snowflakes, the crimson stain on the pristine snow – they would be the last things I ever saw, a testament to the duality of life and death, the beauty that can be found even in the most tragic of circumstances.

With a final, shuddering breath, I succumbed to the icy embrace, my eyes fixed on the glistening icicles that hung overhead, their sharp edges a reflection of the cruelty that had brought me here, but also a reminder of the enduring beauty that would outlive us all.



Mike Vinson is a fiction and nonfiction writer, poet, and movie actor known for his dark themes, exploring love, true crime and the complexities of human nature. His writing blends raw emotion with vivid imagery, delving into both the harsh realities and delicate beauty of life. Known for creating intense, immersive narratives, Mike's work often touches on the dualities of life, leaving readers with a lasting impact. Explore his works on Medium and beyond. (Scan to explore his work.)

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"Illuminating Object", by Dan Botezan

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My Best Winter: A Season of Magic and Memories, **By James Edward Young**

I remember being a little child and asking my mother if I could have a bowl of snow to eat.

Apparently she had no idea what it was like being a little boy because she thought it silly.

But we just had a fresh snowfall, and it was so beautiful on our front lawn. I couldn't resist.

I had to eat a bowl of snow. I was about 4 or 5 years old at the time and it was a little red plastic bowl.

I sat there at the kitchen table with my spoon and my bowl of snow and I had me a good old time. It did lack flavor, but it was very unique. Sort of like eating... water, only really cold. (Duhhh)

I think if I was mom, I would've put a little sugar on it for her precious little baby boy. Something to give it a little bit of flavor.

I also recall being a little tyke, listening to the song "Winter Wonderland".

I remember thinking how happy I was when I heard the lines —
"He'll say are you married? We'll say no man, but you can do the job when you're in town".

So, in my little mind, "Winter Wonderland" was a romantic song about falling in love and getting married.

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My Best Winter: A Season of Magic and Memories

By James Edward Young

That made winter all the better because I was really in love with love even at that tender age.

To this day I think snow smells like frozen carbon monoxide. There was a brick road in front of our house and cars drove by emitting the stink of bad engines and burning oil. Yes, snow has a smell, Frozen carbon monoxide.

My brother and sister and I were done playing and making snowmen. The guy at the corner, was selling Christmas trees. Dad found a good one and it smelled great.

I snuck a piece of Christmas candy and admired the smell and beauty. It's magic.



James Edward Young is a writer of fiction, nonfiction, prose, and poetry. He has a gift for capturing nostalgia and the quiet magic of everyday moments. His style blends vivid imagery with heartfelt reflection, evoking both the beauty and melancholy of the past. He writes melodically, crafting beautiful poems—especially on love—that linger in the reader's mind like a familiar melody. (Scan to explore his work.)

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"Antelope", by Dan Botezan

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“Antelope”, by Dan Botezan

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Winter Portrait, By A.B. Zar

Once upon a time, Time and Heaven came together...
They met, and they were close to each other, but they did not speak until a great void between them receded.
Then a small part of Heaven slipped gently into Time and thus the Seasons were born.

Time and Heaven loved them all equally because each of them was beautiful in its own way. They all had their warmth and coldness, days with Sun and days with Clouds.
One could not say that one was greater than the other because they were all equally long, but each had its own charm.

However, Winter, the last of the Seasons—was the coldest and meanest of them, Time and Heaven always said about her that she was the favorite of the Clouds, even when the Sun spoke to her.

Time and Heaven always looked for a gentler way to explain to her that she was wrong when she did inappropriate things, otherwise, Winter immediately started crying and then it snowed a lot, and if she sighed, the blizzard started, but always after that Time passed and from the Heaven, the Sun came out!

Yes, the Sun loved Winter, in fact, the Sun loved all the seasons, but Winter, somewhat differently, because she was cold and distant with him and he could never overcome her coldness, and this made him want her even more.

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Winter Portrait, By A.B. Zar

In winter—when she looked in the mirror—she saw a beautiful, disheveled woman, but without much of a smile on her face, with long hair like a cloak, white as snow, with pale red lips, with blue eyes like ice, supple and light as a snowflake, with her dress as white as snow that dripped in the form of flakes from her icy eyes.

She liked to play with the Night, and they spent time together. Time let them play their games, and when the Day politely knocked on their door, Winter always asked her to wait a little longer, please, please.

Sometimes, it blew cold, and the frost spread, and the Day said about her that she was bad, cold, and indecent!

However, she had something very beautiful, something that was only hers, she had Christmas and New Year's Dawn.

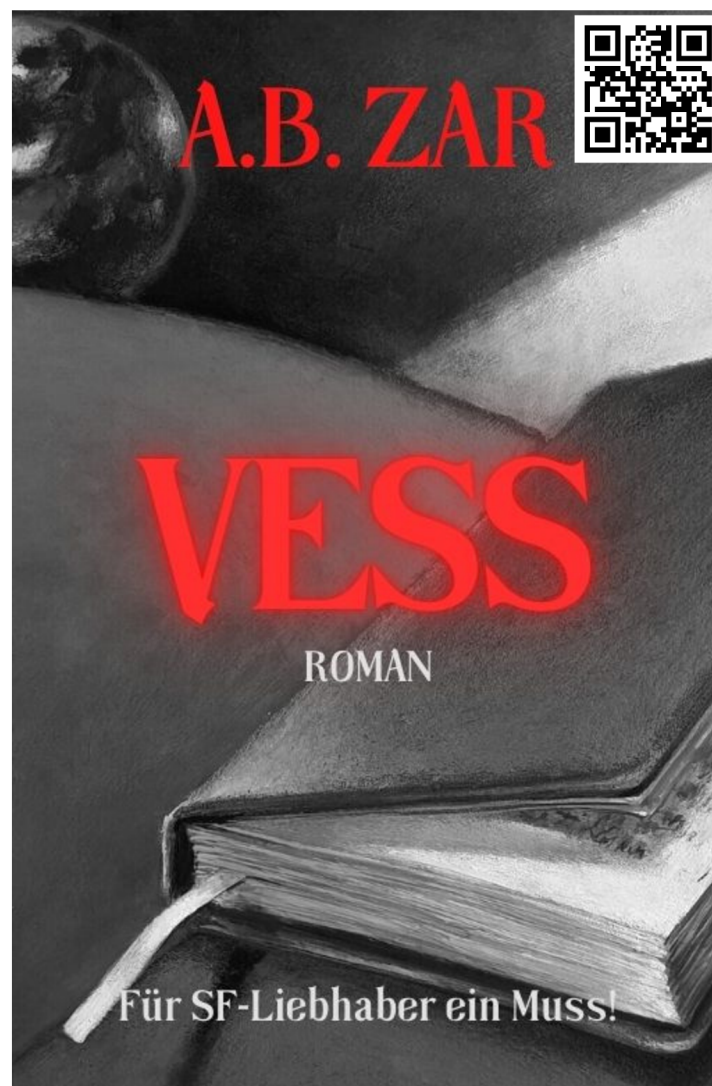
This happened after Winter entered her realm and at the request of Time and Heaven, moved by the pleas of her sisters, she began to speak with grace and ardor, even with warmth, and then her cold breath became warm, her icy gaze became clear and full of tenderness, and kindness came to the surface, blushing her cheeks.

One more step... and the waters rushed to welcome him into its fold.

By **AB Zar**, author of *VESS*, now available in English on Amazon.

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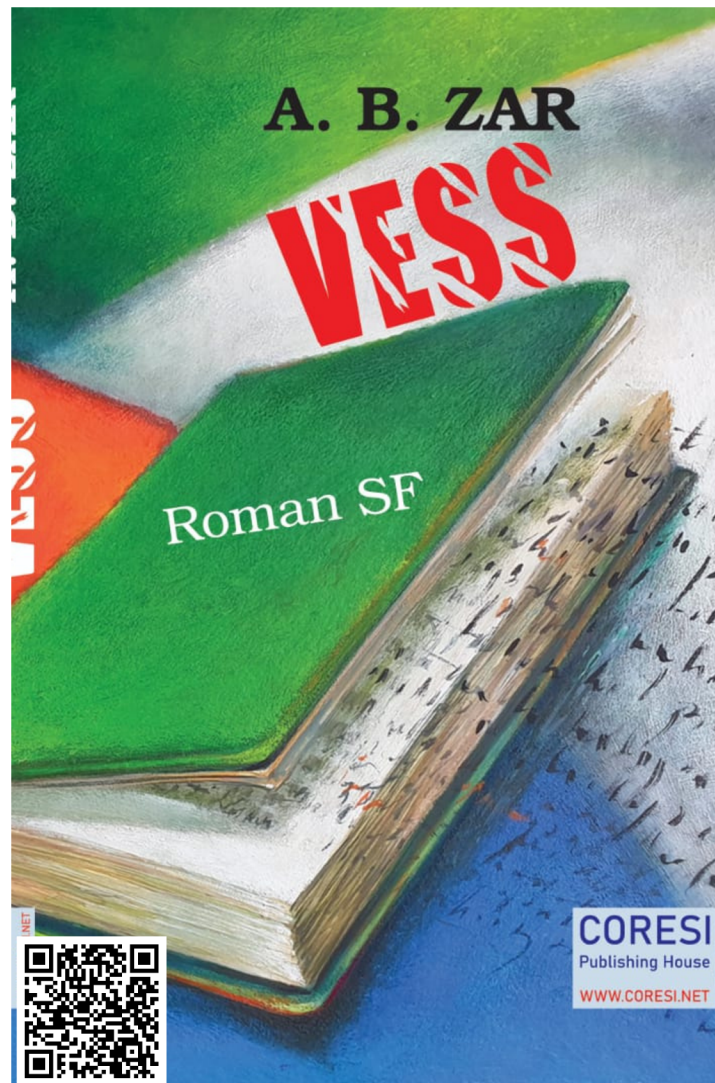
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At the Military Assessment Theater – From VESS, By A.B. Zar

The path was very narrow, and Wall struggled to walk naturally; he had to put one foot in front of the other to be able to walk.

He was wearing all his clothes, layered, to warm up, but the wind was blowing at high speed, scattering the snow, and obstructing his view. He stopped to look forward over the horizon and tried to scout for the enemy.

"I've gone crazy," he heard himself say loud. "I'm in pain from the cold... everything hurts from the cold. I'm not making any progress..."

Wallter Justin, he thought, you're pitiful and struggling like a forsaken soul; this is a task, you're supposed to do it; if it was easy, you wouldn't be here!

He smiled and wiped the melted snow from his face. *That's better.*

He took the laptop out of his backpack and saw a tent drawn on the screen.

Really?! I'm supposed to set up a tent here? Maybe an igloo?

The tent on the screen started to flicker and shrink until it completely disappeared and in its place, a fire appeared.

A fire here with this wind?... The software needs to be updated. [...]

A tent, how do you make a tent, what do I use to make a tent?

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At the Military Assessment Theater – From VESS, By AB Zar

He cleared the snow, made a small plateau, turned his backpack upside down, and everything fell out. *What am I looking for here?*

Before he could finish his thought, he spotted a strange shape, somewhat the size of a person, like a floating cloud, at some distance from him. It didn't touch the ground, it had no clear form, or rather, it could transform into anything. "Dancing" at a considerable distance from Wall, as if challenging him.

Wall raised an eyebrow in surprise and stood up completely to see better. The shape moved away. He quickly gathered all the scattered items on the ground into his backpack; there were some steps drawn on the tablet. Ah, if not a tent, then steps... well, let's go, then.

The shape moved even farther away. *So, I have to walk in that direction, or what?*

He couldn't recall when he had last drunk water, but strangely, he didn't feel thirsty despite the frozen water in his bottles. As he glanced at his hands, he noticed they were swollen from the cold, making it difficult to move his fingers.

Without any warning, a snowball hit him in the back. He turned around puzzled, and another one hit him on the head. Snow remnants got inside his collar, on his skin, chilling him. Trying to regain his senses, several snowballs at once hit him in the ribs, in the face, in the chest, then again in the face...

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At the Military Assessment Theater – From VESS, By A.B. Zar

Wall screamed as loud as his lungs allowed, placing his backpack in front of him as a shield, and began to run. He felt his blood warming up and his energy returning as his back was bombarded. He managed to turn around, running backward, trying to see who or what was hitting him. Nothing, what the heck, are snowballs falling from the sky? Am I being pelted by the sky?

Suddenly, he remembered Malina... Not always is the enemy you'll fight visible...

He stopped under the hail of snowballs to think. Damn strategy, what to do when attacked by snowballs? What would Malina do? And he had a small revelation: Well, you should throw snowballs back.!

He bent down and prepared his ammunition. The balls fell mercilessly, and Wall felt that they were getting stronger.

When he was about to throw the first ball, he burst out laughing: Who should I throw at? What's my target?

When he looked up, he saw the cloudy figure. Do I have to deal with you, Veilwalker?

He threw the first strong snowball with force into the center of the shape

The figure turned into a stretched sheet, which amazed Wall immeasurably.

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At the Military Assessment Theater – From VESS, By A.B. Zar

Then the figure grew, as if someone had spilled a giant jug of milk, and began to stretch, enlarge, and thicken, but always left room for Wall. More and more snowballs fell, some smaller, some bigger and stronger. Wall took all the balls he had made and started throwing. *Veilwalker, are you angry? Get out of here!* He threw and threw, and when all his snowballs were gone, he ran away and used the strong balls that had hit him. Then an ice chunk hurt his forehead. *Oh, are you now using heavy artillery? Wait, I can do that too!*

He looked around fearlessly and noticed that some ice chunks were next to him. So, he took two of them and, as he looked closer at the figure, he realized that it had darker spots: *That's where I hit!* He hit two of the foggy spots hard and was not surprised when he saw that where he hit, there was light. *I got you, now I'll show you!*

The skin on his hands was cracked and almost bleeding, but Wall seemed not to feel it. He took off some of the clothes that were hindering his movement, tore some cloth strips, wrapped his hands, and gathered as many ice chunks as he could. He looked at the figure once again and threw at the dark spots. His shot was short but effective, as he managed to “break” a large part of it.

Then Wall saw a hill. [...] He gathered his snowballs, and the ice chunks, and started climbing without looking back.

He felt the figure surrounding him again, almost taking his breath away, and for the first time, he was thirsty. So, he bent down, stuffed a handful

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At the Military Assessment Theater – From VESS, By A.B. Zar

of snow into his mouth, and cursed... [...] He climbed through the damp snow, hoping to be rescued soon. His backpack felt a bit too heavy [...]

He took a deep breath, squinted his eyes, and struck; first with the ice chunks, then with the hard snowballs. [...] He took a deep breath and tried to increase his pace as he felt the wind. The wind surrounded him, then made him unable to move.

He screamed loudly, pulled out the knife from his belt, and fought like a crazy man with the invisible enemy.

He swung to the left and right against the... wind.
His pants were torn, and his legs were injured. As he looked around carefully, he noticed that the whole white scene was clearer and that he was only a few meters away from the summit. He stared at it attentively and, as he felt nothing strange, he checked his hand device. I still have a few seconds?

He screamed again, louder, like a crazy man, and with two jumps, he was on top, just as the light on his hand device turned green. He fell to his knees and clutched his backpack.



A.B. Zar, author of *VESS*, now available in English on Amazon.

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