

Selling Fireworks on the Longest Night of the Year

By: Mark Christal

In a car tipped on the lip of a bar ditch
I sit sheltered from the cold,
hundreds of snowy miles from home,
just outside the limits of Plainview, Texas.
My fireworks concern, set in the corner
of a corn stubble field covered with snow,
is lit tintinnambularly against the milky moonlight
below the slow and constant crystalline stars,
so that the cellophane and foil on dusty shelves
shows like new hope itself to the townsfolk
up the dirt road, shows like a nova
that leads them, wise men, to my stand.
As cars approach, I put on gloves, get out in the cold,
jump the cherry-red counter, and take my place;
I'm a ram, I pace up and down
the threequarter-inch plywood floor of the stand,
blow fog from my nostrils, bow my head and charge,
from the Black Cats to the sparklers and back, I charge.
Kids pop out of family sedans
and prance like goats in the cold,
throw snowballs, giggle, shriek,
and run screaming to my castle of boom.
They prop themselves up by their forelimbs at the counter
to better view my firey wares with their goaty eyes.
Pointing excitedly with their mitted hooves,
they pleadingly naahaahh to their nannies, I want, I want!