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**01.01.06**

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It's like we're the only two people on earth, you and I, driving through the near-empty streets of St. Louis, this town still fresh and new to both of us. The snow dances off the windshield and you lean forward in your seat, your gaze following closely the headlight's glow. My breath turns to solid fog, then vanishes before my very eyes.

It's well past midnight when your clunky station wagon pulls into Forest Park and I know now that this is it, this is why we've left the warm, damp heat of your dorm room bed. This is we're going, to arrive at this very moment in time. The fresh fallen snow is pristine, a layer of crystalline frosting hiding stone statues, empty fountains, draping like fluffy sheets over manicured hedges.

But it is the silence, most of all, that strikes me as I open the car door and set my foot out into ankle-deep snowfall. Unspeakable stillness, as if the snow has absorbed all the chaos of the world around us. We speak in whispers, kiss without sound, sink to the ground and flail our arms, making blurry snow angels, our gloved fingers just barely touching as we swipe our arms back and forth, back and forth.

**BIO**

Julia Smillie is a freelance writer, columnist, essayist, humorist, ruminator and instigator. Usually based in St. Louis, she is currently living in Ann Arbor, Michigan (where her husband is a Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow) and working on a collection of essays. To contact or for more info, please visit [www.readjulia.com](http://www.readjulia.com).