

# Asylum

Jody Azzouni

Earlier version (titled: "Why  
do I insist on feeling guilty")  
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Just outside, I step on the snow  
hear it murmur like oppressed voices.  
Moments later I'm sitting stiffly  
on a gray mattress, watching your eyes  
move in their sockets.  
Like moles granted temporary sight,  
we silently turn to watch the sun  
caged in the window above you.  
You hug your pillow, pull at it, whine,  
until I think it's someone you know.  
I'm ashamed, but I can't touch you,  
not even when your eyes  
spill their guts onto your cheeks  
and you describe memories  
some of them yours.  
Next, you knead your hands into the pillow  
so I can hear the fabric screech and tear  
then cradle your head in your hands and mumble  
while I watch my wrist,  
and wait for the hourhand  
to move.

Later, I will grind my heel into the slush,  
wonder if I always knew  
I would be a coward.