

1990

## A Cold Mourning

A. Denisse Tedesco  
*St. John Fisher College*

### [How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?](#)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Tedesco, A. Denisse (1990) "A Cold Mourning," *The Angle*: Vol. 1990: Iss. 1, Article 30.  
Available at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1990/iss1/30>

This document is posted at <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1990/iss1/30> and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact [fisherpub@sjfc.edu](mailto:fisherpub@sjfc.edu).

---

# A Cold Mourning

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Appeared in the issue: 1990.

## A Cold Mourning

by

A. Denisse Tedesco

A pale morning light penetrated the cracks in the window shade and came to rest upon my closed eyelids. I drifted slowly into consciousness and stretched beneath the warmth of my down comforter. With a smile, I remembered that it was the first day of Spring. Old Man Winter had gone to sleep and I could now look forward to warmer, longer days. Fully awake, I rolled out of bed and proceeded towards the kitchen to perform my daily ritual: worshipping the automatic coffee-maker. As the coffee brewed, I searched the refrigerator for milk. Having discovered the carton, I was annoyed at finding it empty. My frustration grew as I shuffled through the pantry for the powdered milk. A fruitless search. I grumbled and did what I had to do. I grabbed the first sweatshirt and pants I could find and pulled on my sneakers. Since the grocery store was only a block away, I didn't bother with my windbreaker; a nice jog would warm me up.

The morning was cold, much colder than I had anticipated. The wind seeped through my clothes and a spasm wracked my body. I began to run quickly, thinking the sooner I got the milk, the sooner I would be back in my warm apartment, enjoying a cup of hot coffee and the morning paper.

I came to a street crossing and jogged to the other side. Once there, I noticed a huddled figure. A heap of ragged blankets, brown with caked dirt, shivered as the wind blew across and through it. Approaching the quivering mass, I noticed a woman curled up beneath the wretched pile, desperately trying to keep herself warm. I forgot about the bitter wind and stopped at the corner. I saw a face soiled with years of suffering and pain and loneliness. It was ageless; or rather, to discern her age was impossible. A small hand, rough and calloused, covered with cuts, appeared from somewhere beneath her shaggy wraps and tried to pull them closer around her. Useless to do so, since pulling them up covered her neck, but uncovered her feet. They were colorless. Whitewashed, almost. I recognized frostbite.

Suddenly, she looked up at me. She didn't say anything; her face betrayed no emotion. It didn't occur to me to smile. There was nothing to smile at.

The woman curled up into a tighter ball than before. She placed her head on her knees. A freezing, starving fetus in the womb of an uncaring city. One of many, but I never really noticed them; I always had better things to do.

She turned her head to the side and let it rest there. A long sigh escaped from her chest, one that suggested her fight was over.

I left her to her privacy and walked the rest of the way to the store. So engrossed was I in my thoughts that I didn't hear the owner (who was a friend of mine) greet me as I entered. He tapped me on the shoulder, waking me from my reverie. I smiled

and nodded hello. Walking over to the dairy section, I selected the milk I wanted, then made my way to the cash register. There, I noticed some packaged Danish rings. I decided they would go well with the coffee so I took one box, then another.

The owner smiled as I walked up. With a knowing look, he asked, "Have company this morning?"

I nodded absently.

I paid, left the store, and hurried home. Since the wind had increased in its intensity, I picked up my pace; I wanted to reach the woman quickly. Something inside told me to hurry, hurry before it was too late...

When I saw her, she had changed the position of her head again. Her forehead was pressed to her knees. I walked up and placed the packaged of food next to her hands. My next step was to run home; I wanted to give her my comforter. But I also wanted her to know she had food there. I tapped her, but she gave me no response, so I shook her gently, and her lifeless body fell towards me. Frozen. She had frozen to death. I looked about me, but no one was around who might have helped. No policeman was in sight. I was alone, as she had been until the moment she died.

I moved away slowly. For some reason, I found myself thinking about the food. It would spoil out here, yet I didn't want to take it home. I wanted nothing to do with that food.

Like a man in a trance, I retraced my steps home. I entered my apartment as if for the first time, noting all my "necessities." The fragrance of coffee, which had once aroused my senses, now repulsed me. I stood by the window, bathed in sunlight, yet I was colder than I had been outside. I felt another spasm shake my body, and I fell to my knees and wept.

DOWNTOWN

YUPPIES

MUSEUMS

TRENDY CAFES

SKYSCRAPERS

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

parks

fountains

pigeons

benches

flowers

DRUNKARDS

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

SOUP KITCHENS

SHELTERS

SURVIVAL

Janine McGinnis



**Statue**

**Amy J. Goering**