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Shanty Town

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SHANTY TOWN

When a liquid becomes solid
three to four months a year
A peculiar immigration happens
Crystal Lake becomes an urban renewal plan
Little towns on ice
Fishing communities resided by
Ice Fishermen
A unique and usually quiet breed
who escape to drab little shacks
made of corrugated tin or particle board
Little shacks with tiny tin smoke stacks
and miniature doorways and an occasional
peephole portal.
A southern sun worshiper
awestruck might say
"Houses for dwarfs, midgets or gnomes?"
But no, these are normal men
living normal Northern lives
These huts are at best
places to escape to and perhaps even fish
for smelt, perch and maybe even a pike
if one remembers to bait the hook.
You may never know your neighbor by face
save for his name in white paint
scrawled on the side
opposite the attached skis used to transport
from place to place.
And as the sun warms their self-proclaimed plots
one by one they come off
leaving only a shadow of shacks
by the quiet recluse
Guys on ice.

Raymond L. Antel III