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#1 North

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#1 NORTH

Christopher Darling

I had been behind locked doors for weeks. I watched Christmas on TV, then New Years. I was twenty years old and spent afternoons filling in coloring books with people who thought they were wizards, or witches. Occasionally we'd get a Jesus in, or maybe a prophet, but we were all prophets. We all had an ecstasy or an insight. We all heard voices or saw what doctors never could. There was this girl, Cheryl (fuck confidentiality . . . her name was Cheryl) she actually thought she was a cat. Cheryl would crawl on her hands and knees all day and meow. They put her meals on the floor where she could circle around them, and they even had a mat for her in the corner of her room because she wouldn't sleep on her bed. If I could have felt anything, I think I would have felt sorry for Cheryl. Then there was Craig. His eyes were usually half-closed or rolled back into his head. His mouth hung open allowing saved-up drool to spill past his lips and down his chin. He wasn't catatonic; he just wanted death. I knew this because I could hear him moan during the night. Eventually, they'd give him what he wanted, they'd pump him full and he'd sleep. I can't really remember much to tell you about myself, only that amidst all the people, I was alone . . . or afraid to die in darkness. I had become a machine, unrecognizable . . . in that room with the small barred-window and cold, dirty linens.