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## Summer Snow

Samuel L. Cooley  
*University of New Orleans*

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# Summer Snow

Samuel Cooley

She remembered a time when the white expanse seemed endless. When her prey swam the frozen waters and thundered across the edges of her land. Those days were long gone. Now most of the prey was gone and the fire in the sky glared at an empty land. She could feel its heat on her back now, worse than any memory she had as it burned through ice and fur and skin.

She licked her white paw, perfect for hiding when clean but too distracting when stark after a hunt. A strange sound echoed across her land, almost like ice cracking beneath her paws but louder, more dangerous. She stood on her hind legs to get a better look. Nothing could hide when she stood so tall. She was a cliff towering over the snow, mighty and all seeing.

But cliffs were slow, lumbering things, and she realized she would have to be fast as the origin of the sound made itself known. The land had broken apart, forming a crack that hunted her down, getting closer with every wasted second. She slammed back into the ground, running away for the first time as the crack chased after her.

White pounded into white, tufts of snow and fur lifting into the air. But no matter how fast she ran, the crack was behind her. It grew while she ran, forming more cracks on either side of her. She had seen some of her prey do this before, circling and cornering their own hunt until there was no escape.

She roared her denial and pushed her legs harder, feeling her limbs burn as she shifted direction and charged one of the cracks. With a final great bound, she leaped over the ground, taking to the sky to escape the land's clutches. The land roared its strange, broken sound as she landed on the other side.

She turned back to see that the cracks had connected, taking the land she had just stood on with them. A piece of her home was now sitting on the endless water, slowly floating away. Soon, she would never see it again.

She allowed herself a few moments of breath before she resumed licking her paw. Near death was no excuse to be sloppy. There was less prey than there used to be. She had to be ready to strike at any moment or she would starve. Especially if the land itself had turned into a predator.

Another snap echoed across the snow, tracing the shrinking edges of her home.