

# South × South

*Poems from Antarctica*

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## *I Take Good Notes, Getting Ready to Fly South*

An airship or dirigible is a type of aerostat. An aerostat is a type of lighter-than-air aircraft. An aircraft is a kind of bowtie worn by the sky to piss off lakes and swamps, dirt, center-pivot-irrigation, forest fires. Aerostatic aircraft stay aloft by heating gas slowly, over a burner, then using a tube to blow it into shapes, a swan, even a unicorn, what girls like before they like the flammability of boys. The history of flight mostly has to do with blood and ice. No, the history of flight in Antarctica can't be told just now, it is mostly too sad for this time of night, but for example there were once two pilots, I met them in a bar in McMurdo,

and the first one was telling the second one, shit, I had to turn back. The other one said, well what for. First one, well my hair was on fire. Second one said, I hate when that happens.

## *Sunrise on Mercury*

You go to the South Pole, think, okay, these people are all here because they don't want to be someplace else. Yet the future of people in Antarctica may be that there won't be any people. People are expensive. They sulk and in the Dry Valleys pee where they shouldn't. Some, like me, want to sleep with the cooks. The future of Antarctic aviation is probably drones, just wings and a camera joysticked out of a darkened room in Las Vegas. People are as useless as 1955 helicopter blades, though I look around and am sad to think some day all these rock jocks and f-stop guys and drag-bag Carhartt lost pilgrims with a pink Mohawk and a nose ring may have to get real jobs. Or else not: maybe they can ride it out, run a trap line in Montana, wait for the Antarctica that will come after this one. What is south of south? Sunrise on Mercury. Some day we will need fuel techs on the moon. There was a guy at Pole Station, I can't decide if he's tired or just walks like a marionette as we talk about Byrd's book *Alone* one night the same as day in the wide-windowed Galley: cage fighter thin, ponytail, askew beard, looks like a Forest Service smokechaser or the kind of guy who could have soloed Denali three times then gotten whacked up crazy bad on the fourth. Beneath the jeans, those feet. Can't tell if he's wearing really odd neoprene booties or if he's got artificial legs. Trying to hold eye contact while staring down *yes or no*

to find out.

## *Some Luck, McMurdo*

McMurdo has three bars. I am in the small brown one.

My date has white socks and a red henley burned  
into my palms. So far I have won \$100 at karaoke

and \$200 playing *Warhammer*  
and if this keeps up

I tell myself, pretty soon

you'll need sunglasses just to read  
your mail.

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