

WATCH THIS!

poem by Tristan Roth



Image: "Cold Sun" by Jeanne Wilkinson. "Watch This!" was written by Tristan Roth for *Rattle*'s Ekphrastic Challenge, December 2023, and selected as the Editor's Choice.

You captured the whole thing on the flippy-est dumb phone,
before you got smart. Fourteen felt like the un-freest zone

of youth: can't drive, can't drink, can't rub two nickels,
can't march to the beat of your harmonious own.

That winter of fourteen, you three trudged through snow,
pushing a Safeway shopping cart up the bunnyest slope,

where the interstate goes under the canyon road. With temps
in the teens, you played Rochambeau, with the runniest nose.

Chomping at the bit, Jake always threw rock.
You always threw scissors. You were the cunningest one.

But Tristan was a lame-o poet, who lived life on paper.
"Me?" he said, voice squeaking in the jumpiest tone.

You were complete dicks back then, scared shitless of being
called chicken, charlatans strutting around the unknown,

your cockscombs uncolored by the foghorned winter sun.
Jake did a DX crotch chop. You were the scummiest clone,

You said Suck it! like Triple H and called him a pussy.
You mocked him like girls with your honey-est moans.

He climbed in, then dropped, the doppler sound of his voice.
"Watch this!" Tristan said, before breaking his funniest bone.