

How long has it been?

Stray bells tingle distantly in the void between my ears.

It's not the light, shining through the irises, broken, stolen into its precious fragments, but an unknown otherness that has entered my neural depths.

I stoop to collect the shattered fragments but they seep through my fingers like a foreign vowel. I kneel on the hard glossy ice again and again, unwilling to idly bear the weight of futility; collecting, gripping, clawing again at the impossible task, whitened knuckles trembling with fatigue, vision fogged by ember tears.

When the sallow mist has cleared, only one splintered fragment remains -triumphant in its loneliness, defiant in its quest for survival- clinging on to its meaningless existence for a longer instant.

For a time... how long has it been? I can't feel my toes. Is this the smell of decaying flesh oozing through the snow?... For a time, we co-navigate the vastness of our empty encapsulated tundra-world, once so full of hope and dreams.

Dreams: precious things, dreams. Do not squander them. Don't be lavish with them. Don't just give them up to the polluted air. No: you must pick only one: Carefully seek the one calling to you, then sift through your body, find the rarest spot for it to hibernate, suspended in between. - Is that us I see in the shimmering frost? How long has it been? How long has it been? I'm still gagging -

I set the splinter in my breast pocket and we plow together through the scorching arctic days. - How long has it been? I'm hungry, empty within. I need sustenance -

We've veered toward one another through our dismayed faith: some kind of magic deemed to exude happiness from the pores of our cheeks and thighs, and engorge us in its opulent splendor.

Now that we've settled for being together in each other's puffed-up ignorance, we're lost. - How long has it been? I look down and there's a gaping void through my stomach. I'm hungry -

One day we stumble on an abandoned dream (it wasn't hidden well enough). Note to self: next time be more careful to stow yours out of sight.

We savagely feed on the lonesome thing, tearing at the raw flesh in a cannibal frenzy, blood gushing from the torn limbs, staining our necks and torsos, matting my hair. We feast on it, gnawing on the tender fragile creature as if it were some mighty beast.

We're dizzying ourselves in ecstasy over its dismembered macabre death for as long as we can. - Just how long has it been? - Then we start in running a ferocious race, looking frantically to snuff out yet more ill-concealed tenderness to feast on. To stifle the retching with.

We won't know each other anymore. We won't fall in love with each other.

We will disintegrate, etherealized by indifference to the point of disappearing. Please tell me. How long has it been?