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erased by the resulting slackwater, was one of the most important and sacred Indian fisheries in North America. In some regions, dalles may also be synonymous with dells. In Wisconsin, the geologic feature called the Dells is a channel system cut into Cambrian sandstone, through which the Wisconsin River flows. In fact, the ravine complex was originally called the Dalles. KIM BARNES

### **deadening**

From the verb “to deaden,” the term deadening refers to an area where timber has been decimated by fire, flooding, insects, or disease, or to a clearing in which trees have been systematically killed by girdling, that is, having rings cut about their trunks. KIM BARNES

### **dead ice**

The advance of even a continent-sized ice sheet eventually grinds to a stop. This stalled, slowly melting ice (think of a landlocked iceberg) is said to be dead. Dead ice has a potent afterlife, however, despite its name. Large tracts of remnant blocks of ice created the wet, jumbled, pothole-and-hummock landscape of the coteau uplands of North and South Dakota. Debris in the ice and soil deposited on its surface was shed from the melting ice as a semifrozen gumbo of gravel and earth to form dead-ice moraines. Where the surface of the dead ice was insulated by a thicker crust of sediment, variations in the melt of the underlying ice allowed the soil to collapse into landscape features as round as a doughnut (a ring of glacial debris) and boggy as a kettle (a sink formed when a core of dead ice surrounded by earth eventually melts). These features collect rain and snowmelt and are favored by migrating waterfowl. D. J. WALDIE

### **debacle**

In the spring, when warming temperatures bring snowmelt and rainfall to the watersheds of frozen northern rivers, the flow of rising waters breaks up the winter cover of river ice and floats it downstream. Where these floes jam and raft up—often where the channel narrows—ice

*When you speak about ice, do  
you mean live ice  
Which is blue, or dead ice,  
white as chalk?  
The blue will hold the  
mountain in its vice,  
Crawl up it, swelling, sing  
down at a walk.  
But white is dead so cannot  
climb at all  
And lies in valleys where it  
sings no more.*

MALCOLM LOWRY, “About Ice”