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## Celibacy, A Storm

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## CELIBACY, A STORM

Memory flakes and clings  
Like lichens to cliffs,  
Where out lines of succession  
Grow more vivid in the rain.

A peregrine falcon broods  
On her aerie in a jag  
Near the haphazard spruce,  
Her wings are half-fanned  
Over the remaining young.  
She smells the south winds  
For signs of clearing;  
Hail clouts the escarpment.

What spread and cracked  
Is stammering now,  
There is the quiet of wet rock,  
Swallows are tracing  
Irregular updrafts—  
Nose-diving back to their roosts.  
Soon it will be dark.

To thwart the spirits and keep bob cats at bay,  
I light an old bird's nest beneath and array  
Of fizzle sticks, cut from mountain mahogany;  
I kindle sparks with dry twigs, gathered  
From where the horned toad hides.  
Coyotes are in packs, sprinting  
For Degarmo Canyon; except for that,  
It is still: I hear my ears not hearing.