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.