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Quartz Spines

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Quartz Spines

Here's where the wind has been, wiping
clean the mountain's slate, daily erasing

the granite with its rags and taking
away all the silicate it can carry.

Here the glacier ran, in flutings
scratched along the rim, rocks in the fists

of ice dragging by. I would have liked
to witness that migration,

to be deafened by erratics
on their way through the Appalachians,

but even this ordinary wind's lift
wears me down. When I stroke the stone,

I can feel the parallel lines of hard quartz spines
left behind. This morning when I stepped out

onto open rock, I felt something I didn't need—
a fear of heights, of exposure—erode

and something else, metamorphic, break
into the wind and cold.

Alice B. Fogel

ALICE B. FOGEL's latest book is *A Doubtful House* (Bauhan, 2017). Her collection, *Interval: Poems Based on Bach's "Goldberg Variations"* (Schaffner, 2015), won the Nicholas Schaffner Award for Music in Literature and the 2016 New Hampshire Literary Award in Poetry. Her poems have appeared in many journals and anthologies, including *Best American Poetry*. She hikes mountains whenever possible and has completed about half of the Appalachian Trail. She is a former New Hampshire poet laureate.