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## After the fall of all of this

Amanda Auchter

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MILTON KESSLER MEMORIAL PRIZE

FINALIST

AFTER THE FALL OF ALL OF THIS

Amanda Auchter

The sun collapses through pickets of trees,  
the caterpillar's cocoon. Inside the kitchen,  
the walls listen to this ruin of ours—  
fingers strayed from teacups, the flicked  
orange leaf. Let's leave the earth beneath  
our shoes on the porch, and the wasps  
asleep in their hive above the lamppost.  
The moss unwinds from our branches,  
our empty bird nests. The paint continues  
to chip long into winter, and our houses  
wind backwards: clapboard finish,  
an original varnish. After the fall of all of this  
(last year's burnt harvest, the bayou that ran  
wild across our floors), we continue to grow  
towards the ground. Let's imagine ourselves  
bottom heavy, toe-rooted, limbs  
dragging the soil. When the hour turns  
dark sooner than expected, remember  
to plant the bulbs. Expect a longer sleep,  
a slow steam rising from the street. The air  
too will quiet down on this flat land,  
settle into its frozen pockets, its waning light.