

Accidental Weather

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Even though the moment seldom comes
after the good day's work
in open-windowed rooms
when I take onto the balcony my one
cold can of beer for the day,
a reward to myself
for abstinence and production,
and the light begins its waltz
slowly toward a ceiling of stars,
the declensions of all
four seasons, beginning with spring,
Fabergé eggshell brilliance
dipping with a crack into the coppery yolk
of a later sun, a thick light
that paints unnaturally emerald
a thousand thatched hands of needles
as they tremble in the white pines'
long-trunked creak and sway,

and though an extra dimension adds itself
to everything that wasn't
when it should have been,
accidental weather is nothing,
no thirst, to trust enough
to believe zinnias and crocuses
I grew at 8, as antidote to shooting stars,
are more beautiful now in memory's
cracked greenhouse than to a boy
whose life is gone. But the light
of course continues, and now I can tell
how layers and inversions of cloud and air
cling shell-like to the blurring
horizon of evergreen pines, how they melt
away into layers of emptiness, purer
and purer vacuums, where the stars
shift out from the Milky Way's homey blur
into the absolute black cloth of deep space,
where even the idea of time slows
toward the asymptotic zero
and spikes of blue-white light
drive across the dead millions
of years, to always be arriving

in places like this local cluster
of apartment neighbors lucky
tonight to grill chops or chicken
and break out the canvas chairs,
anxious to breathe the starter's fluid
scent, our small but flavored fires
a taste the body remembers
when light becomes a solid thing
that becomes a thirst for light.