

SKY HARD AS STONE

Seated in my comfortable chair,
I saw that all attempts to chart my life
in the book of secrets had ended
in foolishness.

My pen had run out of ink.
When I dropped it, it spun beyond
my reach. The dark brew
in my coffee mug was bitter.
The page before me was blank.

So I laced on my boots
and went looking for the moon,
which was being swallowed
by a pillow of clouds
over the mountain to the west.

The morning was cold
and I was glad for my fuzzy sweater.
Remnant puddles in the acequia
were glossy with ice. Smooth shards
reflected the eastern sky,
hard as rose quartz.

But a quizzical note, whistled
by a sparrow perched high
in the cottonwood, shattered
my sorrow. With that breaking,
my ears were opened,
and my eyes. I could see,
and hear and taste the world.

And for the moment, at least,
the hunger inside me was fed.

--Janet Ruth (first published in
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