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Björklunden

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Austin Segrest

Björklunden

—in memory of Claudia Emerson

*“The beams of our house are cedar,
and our rafters of fir.”*

—SONG OF SOLOMON 1:17

The name translates to birch grove, though cedars,
ropey, creaking, growing right up to the water,
predominate, clinging tight
to rocks that come up with them.
Hearty but short-lived,
what birches there are are bare,
peach-tinged or beige against the snow.
A clutch of four outside my window wag
their tatters, dark eyes unblinking,
watching for the fortunate isles.

In Door County it's hard
not to think of an open door.

Lakeside, the cobbles' gray clatter.
A wing's feathers and bones
look mown in their wet arrangement,
three quills loosed suggestively from their row.
The skull's cocked over to the side
(lacunae that were the eyes),
vertebrae twisting after it
like tiny, articulated anvils.
The breastbone's arch, the delicate jaw tines

spongiform behind the beak, chipped,
bleached, the keratin eaten away.
Everywhere the cedar needles'
little blood-brown chicken feet.
A wisp of feather combed over the greening pate.

In Door County it's hard not to think
of a door opening.

Long and low, the meltwater waves
sluice through ankle-deep ice that seems
dumped out from champagne buckets.
Long and low and gray-green (perhaps the tide is coming in),
like beater bars pushing back the weft,
they slap back low beneath the shelf,
touching the hem and clearing out,
running blind fingers over the bedrock's pitted braille.