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## [Absent as if possessed as if not quite there]

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Merrifield: [Absent as if possessed as if not quite there]

[ABSENT AS IF POSSESSED AS IF NOT QUITE THERE]

Jennifer Merrifield

Before it burns, a house is just a house with people  
and collections like carousels to spin and sing

and talk about. Desire  
soft and pointy, blushing

at the end like a leaf's last supernova. She doesn't care.

*So a song says there are visions  
of love, a sky and trying to land—.*

Before it scratched, the record was a record  
like all the others: manufactured

from edge to center. She knows it's true.

From a distance, even binoculars fail  
to see how each leaf turns *for* the branch.

Wires cut the sky and somewhere inside them:  
electric crackle. Monotonous. A statistician

at the whiteboard, her numbers aren't cooperating.

She's heard that nature is mathematically contrived.

When the leaves wobble their stems to agree  
it's really his head yessing those numberless *no's*.

Trying to comply with her proximity.

(She wants to be a softer five-edge point.)

