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## At Night with the Dead

Greg Nicholl

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## Nicholl: At Night with the Dead

### AT NIGHT WITH THE DEAD

Greg Nicholl

Scent of wildfire and silence  
wakes me:  
the hum of the fridge released; that click,  
then nothing.

Wind has set loose the gables—  
a wind that carries on it the dead.

Soon the power will surge,  
send the clock back  
to its flash of midnight

despite the hour  
pressed against the house,  
its breath against the glass.

In the yard a child crosses the lawn,  
cowers beneath the dogwood.

I open the door—  
ritual smoke mixed with rain,  
incense and burnt cedar.

This is the closest I've come to acceptance.

Tomorrow, I will collect  
the severed buds of the iris  
three days from blooming,  
their sepals folded against the cold.