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Drift Ice in the Foreground

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Michel: Drift Ice in the Foreground

DRIFT ICE IN THE FOREGROUND

LINCOLN
MICHEL

—for RJ

Birds will flee in flocks not
because it is snowing but so that
winter may be allowed to come.
One sees them disappear above the tree

line and turns back to grab a sweater.
It is blinding in the sky. A bird that forgets
to sing will be abandoned in the storm.
There is one of these in the heart

of every block of ice. If he is freed,
he will nest in the first warm cavity
he finds, even a yawning mouth.
Often I awake to find one pecking

at snowflakes from the tip of my tongue.
If no such home is found, the bird will fly
in circles until he bursts into a flurry
of ice. I remember the first time we met.

It was beneath a green statue glittering
with frost. I was carrying a handful of kindling
and you were desperately rubbing at
a chunk of ice in preparation for the storm.

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130