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Cold

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COLD

Siobhan Phillips

Cold sometimes is like putting in contact lenses:
even the finest furthest branch is plain
and particular, cleansed and bare, thin camouflage skin
of the birch like an advertisement. Cold is the rinse
of an ice-sheer blink or frost and assigning names
to a drift of blur and cold is disclosing rifts
down each sharp nicked-off eave in a mass of roofs.
Cold is finding the space banked tight in between
three sides of an A with the start of a wondering stare
from a stranger whose name one knows but can't quite muster.
Cold is the training to crank one's focus
clear (as a view first trace-paper dim and far
grows nearer, definite, real) and the way one thinks
to explain how a border exposes by holding in
and back: now mine, now the world's in a dawn-pale winter
window, firm thin bars and an endless blank.