

MARY'S POINT

"If we stay much longer,
we won't go back
together."

Mary shifted,
and gravel whispered
into the gorge.
The river below
took it
without comment.

Joe sat beside her,
unsteady—
not from the height,
but from
something else.

Mary
was not usually
like this.
She had opinions,
but kept them folded
in her lap.

"You'll never marry her,"
she said.

"She doesn't love you."
Then, softer—

SCOTT SIMPSON

"I just know it."

He reached—
shoulder,
forehead—
his hands clumsy,
cold.

"Let's go back,"
he said.

"We can talk there."

Mary smiled.

Lightly.

"That's not it.

I'm just worried about you."

He rose,
reeled back
into the trees,
trying to remember
how to breathe.

The light had shifted.
Pines held their breath.
Sap and sun and
the chirr of insects
filled the silence
she left.

"This is the worst time
to fight with your best friend,"
he thought.

Early summer
dried the sweat
from his brow.

A HUSH BETWEEN SEASONS

The vertigo passed.

He saw
the slope,
the edge,
the fall
he'd made.

"I'll tell her.

I love Susan.

That's all.

She'll understand.

We're friends."

When he returned,
she was gone.

The river moved
without pause
beneath the ledge
where their feet
had once hung—
insisting
nothing had happened
there.