

They Don't Acknowledge the Letter C

He thought back to the time
he had blown his son's mind
by making him count stars.
"And don't come in until you're finished."

It wasn't what he had intended, he said
as the kitchen clock twitched,
still wired to the universe's anatomy.

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He was my assistant wrestling coach,
sobbing in the white ruins of his kitchen
for the olde tymes when the towne hospital was fringed
with icicles
and the dogtrack
stands were packed with his friends.

Instead of helping I sat and watched,
desperately afraid that someone would append
a suffix to my name.

It was the marks on my chest,
(bruises from the porn magazines I propped there)
that started the rumors about auxiliary
alphabets in my home.

"There are more bears in one N.H. county," I recited at school,
"than in all of Europe."

That was long before I discovered the zen of hospitalization

in the archipelago of living rooms that became
the center of my physical world,

wandering through medieval Wyomings
as a figure in the distance even to my own eye.

For a long time I dreamed of moving
to the outskirts of town
where you can still burn trash
and see the stars glitter like errors in the sky.

There is a porch where we drink on deck chairs
and when we drink we imagine the oceans receding,

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the dark beaches sloping down like cinema floors.

A yard dog that has grown into the color of his food
watches a set of birds move through the ring of blue darkness
above Richmond,

the rain comes down at a slant
as if shot by Indians

and we are not even close to being through.