Returning to Recollection's Place

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol39/iss2/14

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Returning to Recollection’s Place

Aren’t you, too, energized
by the alchemy of place and memory,
longing for a landscape that charges
in its particular way?

I crave what wells up in me
returning to that patch of timber—
aspen growth shimmering at the rim
of lodge pole pines. It’s akin
to a magnet’s urgency nearing the iron surface
or a cocklebur’s relief when it’s knocked
off the sock and back onto soil.
Perhaps you’re attached to patch of dirt road

or the canyon cliff you repelled down
with a guttural yell of bliss,
even a trashy abandoned shack
where you met with friends to map out mischief.

Maybe passion stirs in that wood where you first
heard a magpie answer squirrel banter
or in cactus-spiked badlands where you
peered through mica at the unrelenting blue of sky,

or a certain curve of shore freshly etched
by sandpiper feet and the sidelong scamper
of hermit crabs. I can’t find an apt word
for the solace that emerges when we approach

the wild place our innocence could not tame.
A dormant homing pigeon instinct kicks in
when I head again for those mountains
to feel the tight clump of otherness loosen.

Maureen Tolman Flannery