

Indian Summer

Holly Welker

If, when September rolls over in the gutter,
picks himself up and stumbles off
in search of a restroom, coffee and eggs,
you pull back the drapes and slide open the window,
he will disregard the screen and make himself your guest.

You must remain calm when you find him
poking your philodendrons, glancing through
sheet music left at the piano; he's not dangerous,
just hungry, and as you watch pancake syrup drip
from his fork onto your clean table, he tells you
of ways he spends the winter. After a while you
notice how thick is his barely gray hair, how broad
his shoulders. You don't notice that you're
leaning forward, smiling often, and when
he tells you he must leave so your children
who will soon be home from school aren't frightened,
you think only of how blue his eyes are.

Several weeks later you are silent as you
look at a blue sky, then close the window
and ask your husband to light the furnace.