

## A Letter About the Weather

JoDee Renae

Dear Nancy: The weather has changed here. The sun lower, the shadows longer, heavier, draped across the Nevada desert like a weighted blanket shadowing the shifting sands. I keep wondering are we, were we, friends, or simply mentor and mentee with blurred boundaries? After 30 years I'm still not sure. The leaves pile up outside; rusty red, warm gold, and deep magenta all twisted together, rattling as they tumble down the street, some raked into neat little piles waiting to be bagged, composted. I wish we could recycle the conversation we tossed in the trash last summer—your anger over my apology that wasn't enough, my defensiveness toward your anger, your email about reviving crumbled boundaries, being "frankly" exhausted by it all—repurpose it into something comfortable to wear; an empty piece of plastic that becomes a faux fur. Your birthday was months ago. Wasn't sure if I should send a card. Winter has come and gone: two-foot-drifts near home, slick roads, felled street lights, downed communication lines, tree limbs strewn about like spilt tooth picks. Spring arrived in May this year; shadows drew back, green blades of growth pushed through the ash of last summer's singe, a riot of pink blossom fell from fruit trees, covered the walkways like petals before a bride. Why is it people talk about the weather when they're not sure what else to say? Oscar Wilde said it was the last refuge of the unimaginative. But it's also a humble exchange that breaks the silence.