

## Letter to C.S.M. from Reno

Melanie Perish

I'm glad you asked me about this strange  
October gripped in time's power, but slow to cool.

A poet I read thought resurrection  
might look like autumn in Reno.  
Recently I've noticed the sparrows  
roost in the lilac branches until I reach  
and unhook the column feeder to fill it.  
And yesterday, the clouds waited to shake out  
their sheets of rain until after I was under  
porch eaves with the dry, chipped nest  
of last year's doves.

Is it the Sierra sky's random act  
or grace?

Last week, I watched Ada, pilgrim of dirt,  
dig for insects near Hunter Creek. Beetles  
are her favorite, but she settles for worms.  
She giggles and giggles. Neither parent  
gives her the stink eye for being too  
delighted. Ada believes people in top hats  
and berets bring blue brushes and red ladders  
to polish the stars. *Every night?* I ask her,  
and she nods without looking up.

No one watches the sky  
long enough.

This morning I walked a Caughlin Ranch path,  
saw a flicker drill a lamppost, milkweed  
with its silk husks seeding.

I went home, paid bills, made tea,  
before the thud against the front window.

By the time I slipped into shoes  
and opened the door, the house finch  
had flipped over, her red throat quivered

before she sang.



Photography by Melanie Perish