Scoria

The primal flare
and lava cone
of galaxies declare
we’re slag, in
whole and part,
from porous bone
to chambered heart.

Dan Campion
this morning I mistook
my streetlight shining through
the Summer leaves
for the full moon
and for a few seconds
I believed she was off her track

Mark Stevenson
What We All Want

When it was uncertain, when the suspense stretched beyond her six-year-old limits, when the characters she had come to count as friends might be caught, she told her mother to read ahead and find out what happened so she could prepare herself for what was to come.

Carol Tyx
BEDTIME PRAYER

Now I lay me down to sleep,
A bag of mushrooms at my feet.
If I should die before I wake,
I ate a toadstool by mistake.

Dave Morice
Morning

winter sky
a hawk’s circle
gathers the sun

Jeffrey Hanson
At the symphony with Joan

Suns may set
And roads may end
But I will always love
The way you say
Dvorak, Dvorak....

Jay Semel
Not Guilty

The slug made his way so slowly I didn’t see him draw his slimy mark on a white stone in the moist shade of the Hosta, the spineless legless creature has been wreaking mayhem in the garden. All this time, I blamed the rabbit.

Martha Schut
Midwestern Midwinter Highways

stationed on fence posts
every five miles or so
the red-tailed hawks
survey the harvested fields
scanning their domain
precise poised positing
their moral imperative

David Duer
Humming Bones

I love tulips the way they pirouette in pastel turbans and take a bow, all winter, humming in my bones, waiting to awaken and unfold.

Julie Nelson
In Morocco

In Window at Tangier, Matisse discovered
That plants and flowers grow in human souls.
The Hotel Grand de Villa France preserved
His room for guests to gauge what he could see,
And so discover in themselves green shoots
And light and mist suspended in the air.

Christopher Merrill
Summit and Kirkwood’ll make you lose your mind.  
Stopping and starting then eye contact and wave.  
Pay attention. TRAIN!  
And Muscatine and First will lead you astray.  
Crosswalks are for suckers, didn’t you hear? And that middle lane is for passing.  
Pay attention. DEER!

Intersections

Rachael Carlson
Heron

I stand in the water
motionless, strung tight, all eyes
until a poem swims near.
Cock my head from side
to side, calculate
for refraction, dart
and spear it.

Nancy Lael Braun
Witness

Late summer storms chum
cool breezes through cracked windows;
Come, witness with me.

Samantha Ferm
Natural Selection

When we are all dead and gone
Cockroaches and
Glitter
Will linger on

Janvier Abramowitz
Not Working From Home

All you need is a backpack and maybe a photo of your dog as you plunk down your pass and lurch into your day reading page 47 of someone’s sci-fi novel over your shoulder, turning to the window as the bustums, glowing a soft outline of itself in flashing red lights. Dawn cracks through tree branches weaving into power lines, through the thin line of silhouettes, next stop, bus passes in hand, waiting.

Diane Blyler
Heavy Lifting

The porch was softly cool, shaded from the noon sun
by a burr oak with twin trunks.
The creaking of the old rocker rose in rhythm with the bending
of grandpa’s back, bowed from so much heavy lifting.
The boy sitting at his feet, humming, with bare legs dangling off the porch,
could not know how hard it is to lift a youth from boy to man
or how, too often, a good strong back is hard to find.

Scott Lindgren
Snow Angel

I can see it now, as I saw it then. That swoop of wings, etched into snow.

The snow stippled as well with blood. All around a blizzard of feathers, and this, this terrible silence.

Dónal Kevin Gordon
Confidence

Darling,
your confidence is not harnessed in one night.
Even the tallest of trees take years before they caress the sky.

Bethanny Sudibyo
You Might Want to Leave a Forwarding Address

Not everyone likes fruitcake; some of us love it. In fact, some of us love it so much that, hypothetically, we might eat the whole thing if it arrived unexpectedly at our new front door.

Lisa M. Roberts
yellow + purple

warm, canary yellow illuminated the small kitchen of our one story home.
one periwinkle sock slid up past my knee,
while the other scrunched in a purple puddle near the top of my boney ankle.
the melodic hum of crickets roaming outside beyond the screen door,
orchestrated a succulent music that allowed my father and I to sway.
picking up my small frame, he placed me down, so my feet were stacked on top of his
we moved in circles, gliding across the cool linoleum floor...

Isabella Skrbich
Cozy

Sunlight slants through
the winter kitchen window

A yellow lemon glows
in a blue glazed bowl

Steam curls up from a tea cup
The clock ticks, the summer earth sleeps
tucked under snow

Debra Venzke
from “The Landlocked Lighthouse”

And out there, calling, is the tower's swinging light, calling clearly as a siren’s singing. I'd like to climb those tightly spiraled stairs and find the one who tends to the affairs of wanderers turned searchers in the dark, present my map, and have him make the mark.

Chad Abushanab
Missed

A cold predawn morning
The wind chime does a lonely dance
outside the window framed in February frost
A new log in the wood stove
A steamy cup of black coffee
Send smoke signals
Meant to reach you

Thia Rolfes
Winter Solace

on a leafless oak
the lone red-tailed hawk screeches
an echo replies

Patricia E. Noeth