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Starkweather House

Chase Twichell

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Starkweather House · *Chase Twichell*

How heavy the trees are with rain,
like trees from another century.

A pound of droplets weighs down
each branch of the lilac,

doubling the weight of its scent.
Above the wet meadow, the crows

float with surprising dignity,
or preen on the slate roof

which is speckled with lichens.
Whoever planted the white flowers

is dead now, with flowers on his grave.
And in the house, whoever wound the clocks

when they were new is dead,
though the clocks tick and chime

in the front hall, where pollen drops
onto the black table and is left there

because the yellow dust is pleasing
to those who are alive.

Someone who loved lilies
chose the paper on these walls,

silver and brown, as calming
as rain, or a glass of wine.

There is a breakdown in the cells
that improves everything,

makes men most delicious in their forties,
the plum when only a tension of the skin

holds in the juice. Did a man stand
in an upstairs room, looking out over

the leafy debris in the gutters
on a fallen evening like this?

Light curved among the slates
that reminded him of fish scales,

and his loneliness returned, a tender pain,
as he thought of the age of his parents.

The whole house smelled of cut flowers.
The crows shook out their ragged wings.