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## October 2001 / Iowa

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BARBARA LAU

*October 2001 / Iowa*

Last month we learned the temperature  
                                  at which steel loses  
half its strength.

                                  Then buckles.

We stared for hours  
                                  at what was gone.

How can this clear, corn-flower tincture of sky  
                                  with its crown of geese

its absence of ash

                                  its huge boutonniere

of sugar-mapled leaves

                                  bring us any degree of certainty?