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Frank Gallimore

Mudslide

Thigh-deep in leaves, listen
to the cabin sink. The train's quick,
wailing its old sound on flooded tracks.
The window's soaked, the briars worsen.
Drowned men get hoisted from the muck.

And heaving the fallen hundred-
year-old redwood, showering with seed
on shattered porches, we find at last no grid
for the ground we open or the ground
we close. In the paper: loggers dead.

And there, in the far grass
I'll count the silhouettes of flooded and felled
headstones stacked willy-nilly into stairs
to a blue room, the yellow stars
of daffodils, a shallow field

emptied of its shallow secrets,
the catatonic sleep of cows.
I must arrange the junk in rows
of a quieter sort of hell.
Listen. In the mashed house the pell mell

of nothing to pass on and none
to pass it to. Rain's fracas drags
the small hours out until girls, sleeping
in their fathers' shirts, wake to the mocking
violin of mosquitoes, the absence of dogs.