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Aubade with Three Persons

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Aubade with Three Persons

I have never seen anything
I understood in the moment
to be a ghost. But now
it's November. & a last
gem-yellow leaf beyond
the stirring curtains rushes away
from the tree it belonged to
as if fleeing. I hear it
scuttle in all directions
on the ground. Searching
& urgent. & further out
muffled clouds press down. Saying
something serious. I want to go.
Get closer to hear more
clearly. But instead I lie still
& recall another
November when I thought
I wasn't reaching
for anything. When I woke
warm on the floor of a cold house
to a dark wet Sunday sky
& arms gathering me as if
in intercession. & when I moved
a little against him
he murmured *Skip class*. But I went
to church anyway. A supplicant.
Circled the center
of the city like an hour
hand passing across the surface
of a clock. My progression
nearly imperceptible. Only

if I had stopped
would it have been evident
I was moving at all.
& there it is: the ghost.
& there I am: reaching.

Linnea Nelson's poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in Cimarron Review, Terrain.org, Spoon River Poetry Review, Rattle, Beloit Poetry Journal, Seneca Review, The Journal, South Dakota Review, and elsewhere. She received a BA in English from North Dakota State University in 2014 and an MFA in creative writing from Oregon State University in 2017. Linnea is a doctoral candidate in educational practice and leadership at UND.