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Lovers
Michael Chitwood

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LOVERS

Heavy run-off made a sudden path in the tall grass. For an hour after the rain, a furious stream came down through the unused pasture. The water foamed and pushed down the long stalks. It even rolled rocks from their sockets and left them, like large, brown eggs, under the flattened, spongy grass. When they came out from the clump of maples where they'd ridden out the storm, they followed the new path, sliding and clinging to each other.

It was hot for a long time. The road rose and followed every car that came along. It was so dry any breeze stirred eddies in the dust. The leaves were grey where the road had settled on them which made the veins distinct as though walking had worn tiny paths there. Once, out for a walk, they heard clapping and a banjo up ahead. A man in a red cap was coming toward them. He was laughing, his head thrown back. Sometimes, to cool off, they rode the old car to the back pasture, and the dust followed.

It was an odd door. A panel of pine boards had been hinged and opened onto the stairs to the bedroom on the second floor. It was always as if part of the wall were swinging open. When the wind picked up, the door would tap its frame as a breeze drew through the old place. "It's so drafty," she said, "and so far from town." Under the maples, only the brilliant leaves knew where the whirlwinds were going.

He, in his black cloak, escorts the woman wrapped in downy grey. Branches, heavy with wet snow, reach for their shoulders and the warm hoods. The crystals on his sleeve arrange themselves like the inscrutable characters of an ancient language. Under the heavy clothes, their bodies are warm and damp. They walk without speaking. The snow settles and fills in.