

Spring in November

by Paul McQuade

The telephone speaks, listens and repeats.

Its voice not its own, it says, *Come. Come. Come.*

The words dance on a frail tympanum.

In another room I dream of a nail-gun
and tetanus of the heart: does it copper,
does it shatter, does it firework-blue?

The dream will not answer. The phone speaks instead.
The words dance on the tympanum. Its voice is not its own.
But I know, I know it and rise to its command.

The morning is black but frost takes the windows.
Everything is veiled in November.
Even the doors has fangs.

Stopped at the edge. One step is all it takes.
Your voice tells me *Come, come, come.*
You know where life has gone,

where the light has followed one axes
or another out, out beyond the pines,
out where the season sleeps through.

It is dead, for a time.
Sometimes we are all dead for a time.
Our lives leave off, sleep under the weight of snow.

Spring in November. One step, all it takes.
Pipe-voice on the telephone, you sing for me.
To rat-dance through the pine-blades

sheathed in bright hoar frost, the branches
and their burden of white specula. Each shatter
of icicle another year of bad luck.

But it is Spring in November. One step, all it takes.
Come, come, come.
The season is dead for a time.

Sometimes we are all dead for a time.
No sparks from numb fingers.
Out beyond the pines, skaters

glide faceless along the mirror of the lake,
like words on a frail tympanum.
The water will not give themselves back.

But spring in November. One step, all it takes.
A few rogue apple trees bear fruit at the impasse,
there where the sap will not budge.

You, there, a green world in your hands. Apple-scent.
The crunch of packed snow. Spring in November.
One step is all it takes.

