

Winter Sleep

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She wants to tell him
about the birch in the field,
how it darkens against the snow at dusk.

She wants to tell him, but he's asleep.
With open notebook, she sits by the window—
the air is blue with December.

Beyond the birch—a tumble of rock wall,
beyond that—the purple rise of a mountain;
granite tilts toward the longest night,

sap freezes in the turn.
A strong wind might snap each branch
into a thousand icicles.

In the time it takes to hurry words, the sky closes.
The white tree has nowhere to go but black,
throws a flash before the fade.

She knows this winter sleep,
this paper birch, its branches
spun like letters into the sky.

When he wakes he will ask, *Night already?*
Yes, she'll answer and show him
how the dark has opened with stars.