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A Few Degrees

Cold slipped in through the corners
of the room, though we never found any
cracks. Something was giving way, something
only our flesh could tell. I made the same jokes
when you made the same openings
for them. I could tell you were slowly
going the same way the chill got in. I could taste
your breath less and less though you hadn't
moved. Your laughter kept tinning and sounding
further down the hall. Your words
became easy script, involuntary. Eventually,
I stopped saying anything, but you kept the daily
conversation up with a me I couldn't see. I think
he lived in the phone, or the tv, or just a few inches
behind me. Sometimes I'd look over my shoulder to make
sure I wasn't there. Sometimes I'd say your name
to make sure you were. We lived like that for six more
months before you wafted north with a few people
you met at a drum circle. I moved in with some friends
just south of the county line. There my window didn't fit
right in the frame. The wind hummed through it almost
constantly. Sometimes even gnats would
crawl in. I was never cold. These things the skin
knows first: temperature, texture, pressure.