**On Merging** *after Ada Limon*

Catherine Ruffing Drotleff

After the emptying of rooms and shelves and walls,  
the press of half-mast boxes crowding in,   
the weight of all those books dog-eared, unread,  
that white wall pocked with scrape and holes, what’s  
left? Its like planting in reverse, and pulling  
out the seedlings. You touch each thing you own,   
bless it, pitch or save it, and yet there’s still quick   
moments of stutter, fit-and-start: what if you dipped   
it all amber, stayed fossilized on the wall?   
Reader, I want to say, move. Don’t stay.   
Even when packing turns you  
into Sisyphus and his boulder,   
and you don’t know where you’ll  
meditate or who will cook dinner, isn’t there still  
something holy about joining? The truth is: I don’t know.  
  
But sometimes, I swear I feel it, the world starting to widen  
like a fern unfurling its fronds, and in a home we found  
together, I can move through different rooms and hallways   
easily, find corners of quiet. There’s room for all my books.  
I marvel at a quiet new urgency, a new intimacy,  
at the gentle roar in my waking up, a panic-beat   
of loss: of this space that is ours now, of him,   
and that fate or chance, roaring like a pick-up truck down   
a dirt road, could mow him over, leave me   
behind. I am awake and alive in my desire.   
I yank the sheets over us both, and  
I want him to survive forever. Stay, I say,  
and we decide to sleep in a little later, limbs  
tangled and trees outside just starting to bloom,  
unfolding tightly-wrapped wax into blossom and leaf.  
Perhaps, we are always hurtling our bodies towards  
inevitable absence, pleading with love  
to stick around another year, and another, and when  
we pack and unpack, move and stay put, we can do it together  
now, and for as long as we can.