**Two Days Before May**

Dick Altman

 *Northern New Mexico*

Aspen I dug in ten years ago—gifts

to ourselves—wear crowns of green glory.

Nightfall will humble the proud heads

by morning. A lethal duet of freezing rain

and hard frost may kill an entire spring.

You argue there’s too much wind on our ridge,

too dry, too hot and cold, to sustain deciduous life.

Part of me wants to please you—and let it all

go back to the way it was. But the aspen

are more than trees. They’re about us,

the inner and outer storms, we may

or may not survive, in years ahead.

So let me be your extreme gardener,

your high-wire, high-altitude champion,

who revels in arboreal risks.

Who sees the two of us as a stand of aspen,

commanding the heights at ten-thousand feet.

But knowing one of us could yield yet

to an ice-bearing wind from the west.

Tonight, though, I fear more for our threatened

stand-ins than for us. My disquiet makes you

laugh.You like to tango with fate,

ridicule my needto defend and protect.

I promise daybreak,against all logic—

as I have countless timesbetween us—

a chance to forgive night.