**Not a Candy House**

Teresa Sutton

So many crows perch in the bare tree it seems

the front yard is on fire with strange black leaves.

And the pine tree out back, dark and thick,

seems out of its element without the rest of the forest

from a fairy tale childhood, not the story you know,

but the unsanitized version from the book

little ones are sheltered from reading.

In the storybook, permission is given to leave.

Someone says, you’ve been here long enough.

They never mean it though. It’s memory

that measures what a forest weighs.

Each sacred place is a paperweight

holding down another cycle of seasons.

I have to touch the losses, pick them up,

and feel their weight in my hands. Words

are not a poem. Here letters melt together.

The only poetry lies in the shuffle of old photos

pulled from stacks piled high in old boxes.

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And in the wind’s vibration of pine needles,

a restorative voice that lets the forest speak.

And in the subsong of crows with their grating

coos, caws, rattles, and clicks that go on and on

until I manage somehow to slam the oven door

one final time, stand up, walk away,

and without a handful of crumbs or pebbles,

find a path from here to there.