**Cliff Dwelling**

Steve Dieffenbacher

The abandoned plaza is a hardpan

of echoing feet, each T-shaped window

outliving the day’s thermostat of angled sun.

Silence leans close against that history,

the days tapering inward, rock uncoiling layer

by layer as the stream drums below.

Strange bodies live here, half-listening

beside the faded murals, following each brick

with sure hands weighed in color.

Under smoke-blackened stone, they move

through recesses with thoughts of escape,

their stale breath braiding our unheard steps.