**The Entomologist is Talking in Wyoming**

Beth Peterson

The beetles are small,

that’s what the entomologist says,

small enough, you

almost with your naked eye

cannot see them.

When he says this

then pauses, it seems, for effect

I hear in my head the word “translucent”

and I realize this is how I imagine

the pine beetles and all those trees they’ve eaten:

there but not there,

the sign and the signifier

and the signified split,

an alchemy I don’t understand

or don’t want to understand.

What I want, I realize as the entomologist talks and talks, is

the ravine, the meadow, the backwoods hunger,

the evergreens swimming above me:

not wobbling, not lackluster,

not driftwood off the fire.