

Alex Leavens

The Yellow of Tamaracks

Hidden behind fir and pine,
their color flashes,
and for a moment
I think it's the sun,
the only sun
under ten days of grey and snow;

not a promise but a memory
of a season I lost at sunset,
when sunlight, squandered on mountain dust,
set the buttes in gold
and the pine held their boughs like beggars.

Summer turned to winter while I slept.
I woke in the early morning,
wind and clouds and snow pressing
over my Blue Mountains.

That sun was shining
on the ground
in minced rays
where yellow needles had fallen

on the snow, where I found the tracks
of a bull elk, a bear,
a mountain lion,
all together on a narrow path.

Each walked hungry
over the others' prints,
on a tightrope,
each pressing those yellow needles
into the snow.

