



Anne Doran

Mohican Lodge, November

Between the waiter and the menu,
we barely had time for the scene
outside the windows, just a slow blink
at light and shadow on new snow,
the pallor of lake and sky seeping
into woods. But when we turned
again after only minutes it was
gone, stolen by darkness, as if,
satisfied by a nod to its existence,
the pale world had taken its leave.

We ate in a cave, conversation
and wine draping our shoulders;
but with the insistence of a cat
worrying legs under a table,
the black space outside waited
to be explained. Why bother
to imagine the dark? Necessity.
The way an empty page loves
a sketch or a porch wants
a curious child to crawl under it.

That night I imagined a watery
plain where conflicting currents
slid across to a far shore,
the click of animal eyes
in a gathering of trees,
and a widow's raw red grief.

Early next morning we saw a cardinal
brightening the remains of night
in a tulip tree—that is, we thought
it was a cardinal. No matter.
Later, there'll be time
to sharpen the red, add a trill.

Anne Doran is a native of greater Detroit. Her poems
have appeared in *Juked*, *The MacGuffin* and *The
Monarch Review*.