

[Athena Kildegaard: Two Poems](#) [1]

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Prayer for Conviviality

Bless us o

fork hedge conifer wristwatch

and the daylight the iceberg the filament

and these thy drawers eaves bulbs cabbages

which we are about to receive

from thy hand

wing lap wave cell pulse

from thy furrow crotch breast pouch

through the thrust of time

the damp of dawn

the spill of wind

the trust of sheaf and burr and shell

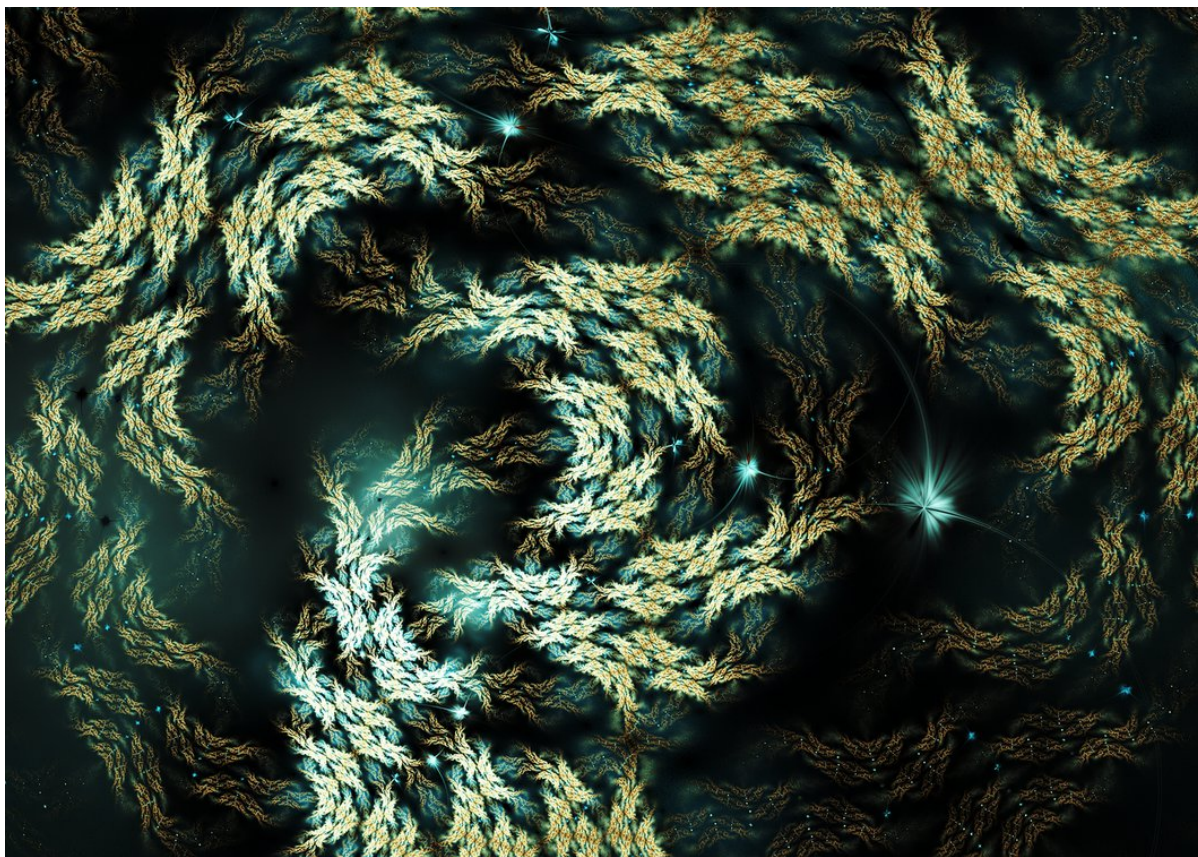
our hand need nurse eye

our thirst sorrow praise doubt

our rein saw lens brush bow whisk blade

our faith and hunger

amen.



The Lost Forty

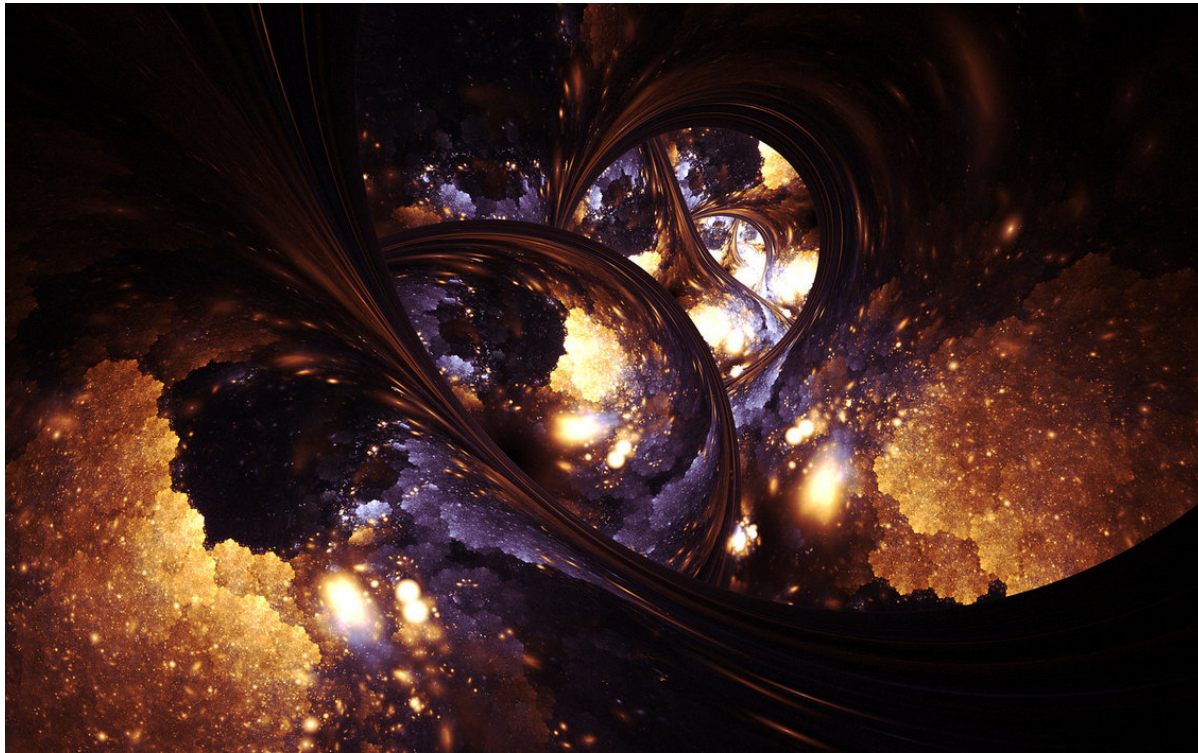
The team of surveyors sent up
by logging interests from the capital
quit early, cleared a spot of pinecones and pebbles,
set aside the kindling, and righted tents.
The usual man built a fire
and after beans and dried apple, another man,
probably a homesick father, brought out
a bottle of bourbon he'd hauled for weeks.
The team toasted the birthday of the youngest,
the first to get a blister, the one who complained
of dew on his flannels, the one who knew
the correct way with the heliotrope.
He blushed at the third toast and the fourth,
woke up in the night and zigzagged
through the woods to puke. On his return
he stirred the embers, added wood, and dropped,
by accident, yesterday's calculations in the fire.
He'd used them, stupidly, to fan the flames.
So come morning they started awry and left
forty acres and a span of creek unmapped.

I've made most of this up, the apples,
the stupidity, the bourbon bought in St. Paul.
Perhaps not the stupidity, though I like the dew-damp
boy who bumbles in the night. It was October

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and the Pleiades leapt above as if to mark
the necessity for error.



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Athena Kildegaard lives and teaches in Morris, Minnesota. She's the author of four books of poetry. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Barn Owl Review*, *Grist*, *Zone 3*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *The Literary Bohemian*, *Tar River Poetry*, and elsewhere.

Athena is a contributing poetry editor at *Talking Writing*.

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