

Donald Wheelock

A Father Waits Out Hurricane Ida

Worry is a hurricane of its own,
stalled on the map of distant family
above the spot you know but will not see,
where doubt still hopes the forecast's overblown;

where hope, that fat imposter bobbing there
above the dancing trees, the wrecks and mud,
and the tyrant-anger of the wind and flood,
defies the boil and tantrum of the air.

Waiting is the fundament of worry,
a stodgy seawall, blind intransigence,
against the bully wind, the tide, the sea.

This father, ground down by storms, and weary,
waits out the hours until deliverance,
enduring swirling spirals on TV.

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Tended Places

Some families stay together anyway,
no more so than in tended places where
the stones have names, a few flags wave,
and silence mixes with the solemn air.

This graveyard where I sit has been reserved
for locals — farmers and their families, sons
who fought in distant wars, their names preserved,
untarnished or forgotten — at least the ones

who died so long ago the weather's worn
their chiseled names away. A burnished plate
on one speaks of our day. Many were born
a year or two before their final date.