Folk Art
Eve Fisher

I’ve been watching squirrels all winter.

They grow them big and red and fast up here,
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racing up and down the tree trunks,
---

out the branches, around the yard.
---

Little prints, baby hands with claws,
---

scrambling on the snow.
---

They’re never still unless it rains.
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Sitting with their fat tails
---

flipped over their heads,
---

scratching nervously until they can race again.

In the lilac trees right now,
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five feet up and glowing gold,
---

is a corncob stashed a month ago
---

by a hustling squirrel with great balance.
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He dragged it up the sidewalk, into the yard —
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God knows where he got it —
---

up that two-inch trunk and wedged it,
---

damned near falling off himself,
---

wedged it in so tight
---

even last week’s blizzard couldn’t budge it
---

even when the tree was scraping ground.

And then he scampered off.

I laughed, and talked of rodent folk art,
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spare and simple, enigmatic and serene.

But it’s still there.
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The squirrels race each other all around the yard
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and up every tree but that.
---

He hasn’t been near it since.
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No squirrel, no bird,
---

Not a breath has touched it.
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They know an altar when they see one.