

Remembering Winter Ridge

Dark, dark, the forest around us, and dark
the Great Basin hundreds of feet below.

But over our heads—the four of us flat on our backs
on the deck of that rented Forest Service lookout,

far from ambient light—veil upon veil of brilliance
soon to be streaked with meteors heading our way

in predictably wild abandon, as they're said to do every
August. But had we learned in which part of the sky?

No matter. Morning brought us a blaze of vastness: faint
outlines of mountains a good three hours' drive away.

And laughter: at the foot of our deck, the stick
of butter Chipmunk stole from Klaus and Britta's tent.

And now, this hospice room none of us dreamed was coming,
so good had Britta been at keeping vagabond cells at bay.

And now, an incredulity vaster than any
desert or sky: on its way: that moment when

breath streaks unseen across the whole of creation. And is gone.

Ingrid Wendt, *The Orchards Poetry Journal*, Summer 2024