

strangers

dogwood & honeysuckle
2007

*... the Buddhas are infinite in number as
the minutest dust-motes of the ten
directions and the three periods of time...*

—avatamsaka sutra 40.7

strangers

winter

being furred in a hollow tree suffices

snow falling
onto this river
2 strangers

last step
down to river's
a root

there's a stone in this pocket you thought was empty

pockets full
you found
you were running home

layers
of

news
paper

under
his coat

dawn—
first the crows
then the ants

out of
the cold

into
these
vacant

wasp
nest
rooms

you hear a mouse & do nothing

this way that way
brother mouse
you're free

in the depths of winter my *field guide to the beetles* arrives

my plastic storm windows are silent today

he's digging turnips right under his window

digging for fossils you look up there's someone

stand
still

this
one

time
try

listen
ing

for
fossils

all at once many birds let go of a guy-wire

all those starlings
now 6 fly off
together

one out of all
those starlings
that's me

pulled-apart
owl-pellet-fur
clings to me

owl-
pellet

pulled-
apart
but

there's
no skull

shivering
he can't name
that planet

this rag in my pocket's wood-ear mycelium

having crammed my pockets
w lichens fern & moss
lie down waiting

these
empty

nut shells
yr

final
eyes

— john martone