

Floyd Skloot

In the Hills Above Amity

From up here the valley makes perfect sense, a performance piece starring time and weather. With wind as overture, sunlight begins to swell and all we need to do is wait until the fog lifts.

The eye cannot help but wander as a patchwork rush of color and form unfolds. Out of the dark, carved hillsides spread above long sweeping curves of vanished river, a crumbled bank where Ash Swale sinks beside the cemetery, swaying tips of second-growth Douglas fir, and criss-cross patterns of winter wheat and rape. In the near distance is a fresh gap where two old oak fell during a long December night of ice. A breeze mimics movement of deer west to east across the ridge just beneath our swollen winter creek.

The grass is littered with leaves. Every detail is now revealed but the whole scene comes clear only if you look away and then look back. Observe how it is possible, in dawnlight and early frost, to see from here the drift of a farmers fence, crisp rows of his young cottonwood trees planted as a hedge against future loss, and the random gleam of water that holds these geometric shapes of hope and faith together.