

MARVIN BELL

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*Resolving the Cold*

Sunshine greases the streets at thirty degrees  
and the new aluminum gutters going up  
the roof across the way, on this final day  
of 2002 when resolution commands the sense  
of a last chance. But for the grace of  
a whisper deftly placed in the office  
or the unforeseen storm that made the roof leak  
one might have lived another life  
otherwise employed. Seamless aluminum  
should last a lifetime, if white overalls standing  
on a red ladder can fix it for good and still  
listen to the ball game. We have custody of  
a house, a neighborhood, some years  
when this or that needed repair. In December  
the phone lines shimmer and the stripped  
maples husband the summer deep down.  
Tonight it's down to the dregs, who set foot  
across the canyon of New Year's Eve.  
Like water that has pooled in a depression  
loosed to flow, laden as it may be  
with leaf rot and sediment, the year returns  
to ground zero and the numbers  
begin again, as if we had as many tasks  
as there are raindrops, each lodged in a vow  
to start from fresh, intoxicated by youth.