

Barcarolle

by [Peter Cooley](#) in the [August 28, 2019](#) issue

The day I was confirmed, you turned to me,  
sang out, while I stared straight ahead  
through the sudden Wisconsin blizzard,

trying to keep our car on course toward home,  
“Maybe this is why we got together.”  
I thought that was too much hindsight, foresight.

Now, ten months into your death, our life  
together winds and unwinds, spiraling,  
snowdrifting, melting, freezing to melt again.

On the west wall of the room you smoked in,  
coughed through, smoked, room I’ve had repainted  
that blue the sky aspires to, our cross

we bought together at the Poor Clare’s Bazaar,  
our cross holds up these words you’ve brought to me.  
Hanging it back up in the repainted room,

after the fumigation and new hue,  
I chipped the paint, the plaster. The cross—  
it waits for me to finish singing this. The cross—

The cross gives me new words, to call them mine,  
to draw from currents of this morning room.  
The cross is still not finished with us yet.

The cross stares down at me, a still, unfinished look.