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Two poems

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Late Afternoon, Turn of the Year

In the mean
while, this grace

between first
light and last:

bare oaks back-
lit by weak

western sun,
black baroque

inked on sky.
This lean time,

night's trial
run. What's left?

A grey dock,
drenched by waves.

Clenched by sand,
grey rock.

Wintering

I watch the grey wash
engulf the grey rock

late in the season,
late in the day,

and watch the lather
leave the rock behind.

Soon a heron
will abandon flight,

or a sandpiper,
and stalk or skitter

into sight
and then depart.

I have let go
of all but looking

at winter's turnings,
let weather in

through the door
of despair. As night's

ash begins
to fall, I see

shorebirds vanish,
the ocean recede,

the rock disappear.
The wash is still here.

NICHOLAS BRADLEY lives in Victoria, British Columbia.