

Before Winter

by HR Harper

A registered letter arrives. He tosses it on the laptop.
It's August, no need to open it yet, he reasons.
He wants to open the letter in time, with care.
He suspects seasons will fall out.
Spring, green and itchy.
Summer, sweaty and exhausting.
Fall, illuminating the body's sadness.
Winter, the deep unknowing skin.
He knows he's wrong about time --
now that the sunlight falls on its side.
He'll never make it to winter solstice,
but he pretends the days lengthen.
He rolls seasons up like sleeves,
and marches up his imaginary hill.
He thinks the lie we all will tell is hard work.
We say it's a letter opener, but it's a murder weapon.
Then the letter opens on its own
and the days he does not live spill out.