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Off to School in the Atlantic (Tremont, Maine)

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Off to School in the Atlantic
(Tremont, Maine)

Summer's end, young alewives swimming
by the dam in dark clouds,

silver linings as they turn
back to the green, deep hole

at the center of Seal Cove Pond.

There's a snap to the air,

early raindrops staining concrete
to mottled shades of harbor seal;

NOAA weather radio's calling for two,
three inches of thrumming rain,

time to lift the sluice boards
and let the alewives go,

hemlock boards catching, seizing,
or maybe the tender hesitates,

not ready to let the juveniles
swim away with their youth;

there are Great White sharks
circumnavigating Tinker Island,

some alewives won't return, some will,
springing up the fish ladder to

home waters they never thought cool.

Today, there's a gravity in the fall;

yanking the first board's the hardest,
apart from every one that comes after.