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## For a Piece of Driftwood

Richard Curry Esler

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burst, among the hard oaks as crude as stone figures, under the wide bowl of the sky, would anyone see her fleeing, fleeting whiteness except God. Would God care?

Just then she heard a car in the driveway, and then she was running toward it. She saw the light inside go on as the doors opened, saw her Uncle Bill, tall and tired from the long drive, and her aunt. She came running on and threw herself into his astonished embrace.

"Oh, Uncle Bill!" she heard herself saying. "My daddy is dead. My daddy's dead and I don't know what to do."

"Hush, baby," he said. "Don't you cry. Everything's going to be all right."

## FOR A PIECE OF DRIFTWOOD

$e = mc^2$ , and so I praise  
 this piece of driftwood  
 to the square of light,  
 this mute gray marriage of dead cells,  
 once fleshed with tissue,  
 once wind-warped, rain-stroked, frost-furred,  
 once cyclically buried by the mindless snow  
 until the sun ran hot and close again,  
 once warm and moving with the green-sweet sap.  
 My touch crumbles  
 the sand-worn wood to dust,  
 drifts from my hand,  
 sifts  
 down  
 to the arched and sun-warmed back of earth,  
 litters a hand's-breadth of soil,  
 gray crumbs glinting with the vast equation  
 $e = mc^2$  — is this  
 the resurrection and the light?

—RICHARD CURRY ESLER