



HR

44

NUMBER FORTY FOUR

\$13.00 US / \$15.00 CAN



*American Thrush:
Search and Rescue*

I've been thinking about theories
of collective unconsciousness, trying
to will the 11,832 foot peak that
dead ends this valley to move a little
so I can see the meadow behind—mule ear,
dusky horquilla, drought spring—
and the base camp of my late teens. The man-boy
there, above tree line, lightness
of thin air, so thin Carlos, furloughed
from juvie to learn alpine rescue,
rolls into me in his mummy bag, "I haven't
told anyone this yet." "What?" "I stabbed
someone the night before we came out here,
I stabbed them real bad." "Is there
any other way," I asked, "to stab
someone?" and he didn't laugh and I watched
him sleep all starlight and in the morning
we rope coursed a cliff face to pull a woman
with broken coccyx out of an ice pick shoot,
to replace the adrenaline of guilt
with the adrenaline of risk. Tonight
I want the mountain to shift a little
to the left so I can watch John Muir

walk away from his rigid Protestant
Scott father, so I can watch him
pioneer woods and cliffs, unknown
flora, unknown fauna, at night,
moon, no moon, water ooze, no ooze,
with his dog Stickeen and remember
what it was like not to back down
to fear, to the things that might happen
and the things one "should" do. But
in these ski slope condos without snow,
in the minds of the chickadees, the collective
unconscious is elsewhere tonight. My friend
puts his daughter to bed with a bottle
of milk. Her second word after Cooper, the dog,
was "terrorist," and I can hear someone watching
a documentary on the Ambush at the River of Secrets,
another battle in another war of secrets. At any moment,
one out of every four people in this country
is concentrating on Jesus showing up
within the year, and I'm giving up
on the mountain to call a friend
who won't get the mail because it could
contain a new flu and then I will
join 5.6 million other Americans watching
their favorite ex-model host a cooking show,
make ceviche and marvel how an old,
overweight fiction writer, eighty-seven
million muslims once wanted to kill,
got to bed her, bravely, every night.