

Jay Leeming

AT THE FALLS

The river loud and roaring today,
the waterfall a thunderstorm
that never moves. Clouds of spray

rinse fallen sycamore leaves for hours.
Years ago an abandoned millhouse
was swept away by this river in flood,

swallowed whole, carried downstream
and thrown over the falls' high edge.
Miraculous how that building

was once a blueprint spread out
on a desk, was once lines on paper
and pine trees rooted in earth;

trees felled and then cut into planks
pounded together nail by nail.
Carpenters sweated to cut those boards,

worked to build the frame tight
so the mill would stand through years
of hard storms and winter wind.

But the river had its own work to do,
its own craft of roaring and taking.
Here in the rip-saw crash of this water

I feel the grip of larger pattern,
how all things are shattered out
of themselves, broken and gathered up;

how one day rain was added to rain
until that whole ruined house
came showering out of the air.