

# Appalachia

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## Irruption

Ann Taylor

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## Irruption

“Into the Hammonasset Campground,  
to the parking lot off the rotary,  
then a stand of pitch pines at the ocean.  
They’ll be there.”

One week before, Atlantic wind  
drove into the Connecticut coast,  
delivered early winter  
and a flight of red crossbills  
straight to the scarcity of trees.

With ten astronomical telescope cameras,  
camouflaged in deep forest green,  
photographers pry into the pines,  
rugged Christmas trees animated  
with living ornaments—fluttering, bouncing,  
burrowing to the trunk, pecking at cones,  
pressing bills crossed, say the ornithologists,  
at just the right angle for reaching  
the seed deeper within.  
Click, Click. Clickclickclick.

With their high-powered lenses, they might  
feel as close to the cones as the birds are,  
though never so far within, a special  
crossbill skill, minutely studied.

Less well-armed, I focus on one,  
perfectly field-marked in the late afternoon—  
stocky, red-breasted, black-winged,  
bill thick and curved, with tips crossed.  
Wind-tousled with a cone on a high branch,  
this one was busy, like the rest of us,  
attempting to break, as far as possible, in.

*Ann Taylor*

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ANN TAYLOR teaches poetry at Salem State University, in Salem, Massachusetts. Her recent collection of poems, *Bound Each to Each*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2013.

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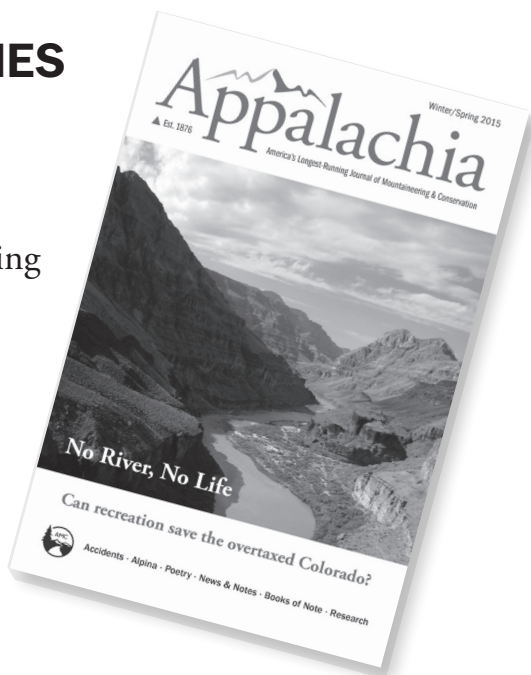
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