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Only Annual

Ann Taylor

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Only Annual

The spring's big night has come and gone. I'm late
for salamanders, vernal pools again,
the muck and mud, just right on that one date.

Occupied, I chose my usual fate,
missing this one-time vital digging in.
The spring's big night has come and gone. I'm late,

unlike Housman, knowing cherries abate,
who wouldn't let his blooms become has-beens,
so hiked through muck and mud's ideal dates.

I missed the yellow-spotteds' single night
just as before, my inattentive sin,
while spring's big night arrived, departed. Late,

I didn't catch their marching, congregate,
their frolic, matching, digging to begin
in muck and mud, set for this single date.

Next year, I'm sure, I'll note their plans to mate,
delay my work, determined to take in
the spring's big night for which I won't be late,
alert to muck and mud on that one date.

Ann Taylor

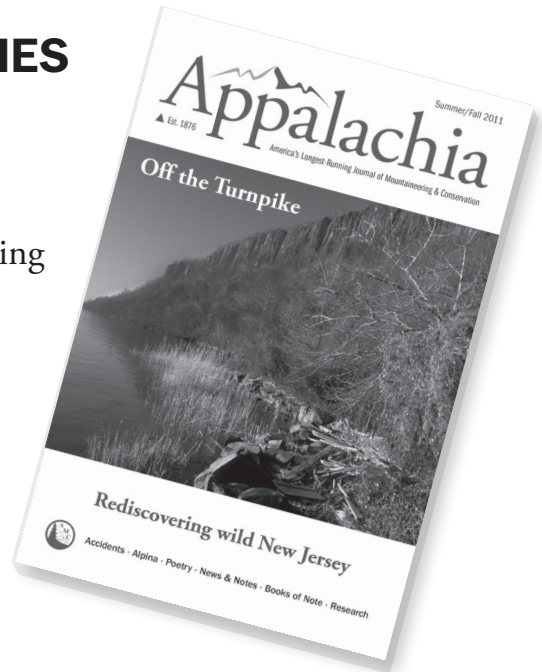
ANN TAYLOR teaches poetry at Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts. She has published in *Arion*, *Ellipsis*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The Aurorean*, *Snowy Egret*, and others. She lives in Woburn with her husband, Francis Blessington.

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