

Fall Storm in NH

By Holly Dunlea

Titans enter.

The night's air is expectant.

The mood instantly swings from casual shuffling
to the whoop and cackle and schmooze
of collegial banter in political pig-latin
as redundant speeches
echo off the walls.

Panhandlers masquerading as volunteers
look for handouts, and workers

*(break for commotion,
for ears to stop ringing,
to peek into the darkness
and campaign managers
listen and wait*

*(and wonder
about the end result of the night's babble...smirk
at an obtuse question...is there
a contradiction?*

for the end-of-game dash
in a midnight rendezvous
with a competitor's assistant. *(Avoid
the man with the black tie
whose history would make a rock shiver.*

...wince
at the glare of bright lights...
will that question be answered?

Sprinkles of conversation
drape across the shoulders of tepid promises
during an inspired speech,
testimony to the evening's highs and lows.

Confetti exits
after a careful farewell then struts
through leftover whoop-de-doo.
The campaign's centerpiece departs.