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Dear David Ignatow, or Against the Odds

by Ryan G. Van Cleave

It's an omen, perhaps,
that white-throated blue jay
that appears each dawn
on the shortcoming of lawn
that is my front yard.
How he pecks and pulls
at worms that aren't there—
I think of my Cousin Mike,
who carried lockpicks instead
of a briefcase. I am a species
related to the night. The sky
is always splattered with stars,
even if I can't see them.
When the jay takes flight
again, the cypress wind cool
under its wings, I feel myself
in this chair, at my desk, huge
and earthbound, a mere rustle
in the white-bloomed azaleas
that grow and grow but never
seem to get anywhere.

