

MICHELE LEAVITT

First and Last

If pleasure is the absence of pain,
then pain comes first.

In the planter outside my front door,
a wren's nest whorls down

to darkness. The nestlings chirr when I pass by,
or when the wind's fingers brush too close,

as if the wind and I are mothers,
returning with meat, as if refreshed

sensation means relief from pain,
meaning pain comes last—

like a shadow, sleek and well-fed,
or a body's imprint in the bed.
I grow to love you, dear familiar.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele Leavitt is the author of *Back East* (Moon Pie Press 2010) and *Walk Away: a memoir* (Kindle Singles 2016). Her work has also appeared in *North American Review*, *Baltimore Review*, *Sycamore Review*, *Guernica*, and *Hermeneutic Chaos*. A women's economic stability specialist at Santa Fe College, she lives in Gainesville, Florida. Online at www.micheleleavitt.com.

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