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## Strobilus

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## Strobilus

*stro•bi•lus* |'strōbələs|

noun (pl. *strobili* |-, lī|) Botany

1. the cone of a pine, fir, or other conifer.

2. a conelike structure, such as the flower of the hop.

I asked you, *What do we carry and what has been dropped?*

October was the opening cone of a conifer. Unfolding spirals of shields, breathing a release.

The hillsides were six months dry. Bouquets of bunch grass bleached in the sun.

New England eyes are adapted to moist air and the flaring intensities of maples. It took you a while to understand the California autumn.

That first February, you thought I had brought you to a stormy place. The El Niño rains fell for weeks and weeks, and the hills were achingly green.

Summer came with May, and the sun baked the land. Then the sensuous hills turned to gold. Your senses opened to a new place.

Autumn was a subtle change from summer—faint, like the clicks of Jerusalem crickets in the leaf mulch—a progression, like the clouds that were billowing fuller.

Pinecones fell on the dusty trails. Balled fists released their seeds.

That first autumn I had a dream. The Three Heron Ladies greeted you. Two of the sisters were perfectly white, and the third was slate blue. The blue sister spoke to you.

In a still pool, in the dry creek by our house, a minnow swam away.

I think you may have had the same dream.

I asked you, *What do we carry and what has been dropped?* You were lost in your thoughts until the rains came again.

-Wulf Losee  
Fremont, CA