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FIRST PLACE: POETRY

J. Daniel Byford

The Friar's Search

I had a feeling for straying with the clouds--
sharp my pointing sought to prick their shadows with a thought--
to scrape against their cosmic sharding skulls
I pierced them through as swift as sight
to splinter like a gridless point feathering through a cyclone.

I would have fled into the forest to find the fabled bird,
or if the salted breath, the aging sigh had scented near,
mermaids might have beckoned me to the bastions of the sea.

But I blew far beneath a hurling earth,
mad as dust beneath a spider's pillow
and among the guileless gales gathered humming worms
to wail the endless lays of bootless gods.