

Relics

I never feel so alone as when I see
a used toothpick left on a damp napkin.

Think of the birches God made, their bright paper unraveling
—a grove of bandages with shivering leaves.

Trees rattled to the ground with a chop,
stripped and crafted into picks for teeth.

In the future, we will be issued white coveralls
and one toothpick from the government.

A splinter from the last birch forest,
the toothpick will be micro-chipped for ID

To Be Kept On Your Person At All Times.
We'll be all business, no time for cocktails.

When the president walks in, every official will stand
and touch their breast pocket with the toothpick,

the one thing they know connects us with holiness.

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