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Abundance

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Lisa Fishman

Abundance

You say perhaps birch trees
enclose the clearing we have in mind; I say cartwheels
turn over like stars, like the tops of blue houses on fire
or long hair streaming behind birds on their way to nest.
Lately they've been swooping down on peoples' heads
in San Francisco,
desperate for lack of brush or trees.
Have we come yet to the clearing

of odd light that equivocates the past and present, say,
or belief and desire?

If the latter two come down to the same thing, I must
tell you

I rode a silver bicycle today, I bought groceries.
Later in my car I ran over a bird sitting in the road. The
light was green

but I would have stopped had I seen the bird
one second before. Split
this image (the green light) into hours,
days, the beginning

of more hours and days, but stop at the plumb line falling
straight
down the wall from which the mind descends: for
instance and
for instance . . . If we see further
into the past it contradicts desired forward motion—but
who would disbelieve

in claims to see what hasn't happened yet? Imagine
believing

that human hair around the fruit trees
would keep salt-tongued deer on the outskirts
of the orchard, that they would take the scent of a thing
for the thing itself. That summer we had one plum tree
left,
so much sweet bark chewed down to almost nothing.
We got the hair from beauty shops in town
and from the school bus I saw auburn,
blonde and brunette tresses matted on the ground. The
truth is I did not wonder which
women were partly wound around our trees, it was too
hot, if you remember—
the heat riding waves of sweltering light
all summer and all fall and the asparagus
growing wild, growing all the way to seed.