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## At Forty Foot

Emily Oliver

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AT FORTY FOOT

Women already swimming  
easily, their arms petal  
around their swim caps, older

than twice the years I've rooted in  
the earth. Afraid for my blood  
in its blue stalks, of shock

and drowning. Older than  
the woman I am the grown daughter of,  
or than the man in the novel

though he also swam here. Salt bastard  
-cold water spluttered the rock lip.  
Swimmer, so brave!

The swimmer laughs,  
un-depleted. Fortified,  
for water...inches of fat.

I gather the spill of my stomach.  
I too am considerable. Swimmer,  
these hips are a furnace

for warmth; I've welcomed in  
the stranded. I've washed  
a woman with cancer standing in a shower,

hand on my shoulder  
so she did not fall. I was held up  
with a pistol. I've plundered myself

more elegant stories—I saw that flood  
rising and grabbed at what  
I've wanted. The swimmer

and I climb the cliff side  
jump. No. You are just a little *slip* of a girl.  
She is in these waters everyday.