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## Until I Was Older, I Believed Swimming Was Learning to Breathe in the Womb

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UNTIL I WAS OLDER, I BELIEVED SWIMMING  
WAS LEARNING TO BREATHE IN THE WOMB

It is October. It is raining.  
The whole countryside melts  
into a nondescript gray.  
A green Ford travels down  
Highway 96 headed for Woodville.  
Now and again, logging trucks  
pull onto the road, the Ford  
slows, then speeds around them.  
Most of the farms have chickens,  
a few pigs under oak trees.  
The ground is wet, full  
of a dark odor: feces,  
the weight of the dying season.  
Even the houses are gray,  
the summer white of their paint  
littered with rain, roof-run.  
The Ford passes a pasture  
where horses graze. In  
the foreground, a mare  
crops some last bit of grass.  
Beside her lies a colt,  
half hidden in the wetness,  
feet frozen in a run,  
nostrils flared, the inside  
red, feathered, almost like gills,  
as though in last moments  
he thought of a warm sea womb  
and perhaps would remember  
how to swim, would somehow  
break the crest of this foam,  
would rise trumpeting,  
calling the mares, the fleet  
white stallions home.