

Fall 1979

One Hot Day in October

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ONE HOT DAY IN OCTOBER

You wait in a corner of the schoolyard,
damp in your peppered cords.
At last, down soft, sucking asphalt
your father's car comes shimmering toward you.

You have never been swimming together
and you sing down the country roads,
past barns and withering pumpkins.
His collar is open.
His false teeth curve in his pocket
like the hoof of a tiny horse.

You walk through madronna leaves to the harbor.

In the shadow of a huge stone
you turn from each other.
When you look again, his skin
is the color of sliced pears.
His bathing suit is deep
blue wool, with a belt, and a buckle
where a slim woman arcs in a swan dive.

He dives through the water.
His hair flows from his head like kelp.
He is turning. He is kicking
and stroking with a smooth, terrible
grace you have never seen.
He is the sea for you.
He is the pelican lurching
through a long, white sky.
You will swim in his wake forever.