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Five Arks

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FIVE ARKS

The Plan

Five days
I've practiced the sabbath
kneeling at the foot of a Joshua –
made five fires, held
each one as a finger
against the rain–tried
to build a boat, but my family
stayed behind.

The Question

I ask my grandfather
where is the moon?
He is at my side
and leans
close enough to answer. His mouth
is the moon. He will not speak, though,
but bends
as his skullcap falls:
swim, we shall get there sooner.

The New Ark

Grandmother
kneeling for us
in her backyard
begins the new ark:
lemon peel, boxer,
crook of the forked olive.
Rib-bone, thighbone,
skin of a thousand moons
laced with daughter's hair.

The rough of a tree. A birdbath.

Her breasts lull me into the afterlife.

The Portent

Mother

standing at the screened door

reminds my father:

gold for the pantspocket, goldstone.

Bread for the breastpocket, never go hungry.

For the sandals, bung shards. Try to keep afloat.

For some reason

he would not dress that morning

but wandered downtown naked

through the streets, whistling

as he passed the schoolyards,

his clothes strewn in a star

upon the front lawn.

The Journey

Five days

I've watched trout

well in the belly

of a pond, numinous eyes

trailing into white.

Have fingered my pockets

wanting almost to mount their frail bones.

Placed mud on my scalp

only to hear them murmur

and rock.

Still, I have decided

to wait with the rain, listening

for their tiny hulls

and to follow behind them

into morning light.