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## Darker

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## DARKER

The dog has run away again.  
Her day off she drives through  
Fairbanks snow-covered streets  
calling him, to come home quiet,  
eyes animal-like with his loss.

After dinner her husband heats water  
for the dishes, saves some for her hair.  
She leans into the deep bucket as he pours  
water over her head, holds her small waist  
while she towel dries her hair.

The dog is not waiting for her  
but the woman knows where he would have lain,  
and how her hand would have passed  
over the stiff-furred head. She creates  
a curve of warmth in the bed.

Her husband does what has become  
habit: smoking after dinner,  
pulling her to him the way he drags wood  
every morning. She wants to tell him  
that strength is not everything.

She stares at his boots and her shoes  
near the door, as if parts of them  
are always leaving places. He sleeps.  
The room is too dark for her. Alaska is darker  
than any place on earth.