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The Longing

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THE LONGING

*Death is the supple Sutor
That wins at last—
—Emily Dickinson*

When he slipped on the mountain
I would have held him
but he chose the jolt of the rope

when the raft overturned in the canyon
he was confused he went up
instead of down to my arms

I wait to the right he turns left
I am on time he is early or late
I whisper when he lies awake at night
he turns on a light he pretends
he does not know me

I cannot forget his face
every day he becomes more beautiful
and my longing becomes harder to bear

but I wait
I know him better than he knows himself

I watch him walk in circles
lift his feet in the same worn tracks
all the time he comes to me
like a moth in love with the moon

I watch him read books
scratch words on paper
he will understand nothing
until he looks in my eyes

I watch him build his heap of things
find friends and lose them couple and part
I am the one
always beyond his reach

I was with him in the darkness of the womb
they took him out screaming he promised
to come back to me

when I step from behind that final tree
he will throw down everything even his name
and before we lie down together
he will hold out the handful of blood
that remains from his birth crying *here*

I carried it all the way for you