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Faceted

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FACETED

Cass Sissel

My life has curious divisions:

$\frac{1}{2}$ my mother's, $\frac{1}{2}$ my father's.

By *father's* I mean the flat plains of the eastern end
of every state. Barren, and blowing, empty
and rarely comfortable. But when the sun hits right,
you've never known such carefree air.

My dad's half learned how to swim; I can't imagine the winters there.

Winter is a place stacked up against a shelf
of rock, populated with wrung out thoughts
kept warm by the blanket of six refineries.

My mom's half never knew a sunburn
and spends $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year aching
for the implicit support of water.

By *father's* I meant grandparents, and by $\frac{1}{2}$
I mean $\frac{6}{8}$. June through August I soaked
up the damp air of their living room
and learned through saturation how big
hearts can be. Eventually they reach a point
where they become sedentary--

My mother's father was restless, always
bouncing his foot but he showed me rocks too,
smooth tumbled agates divided for display.
He showed me that sometimes a cross section
is the best way to look at something.

My father's father showed me rocks that are circles.

Curved sandstone and the spine bones of dinosaurs,
he kept them whole and laid them in his yard
to rest. You can see why I want to swim
in the winter: always on display.

$\frac{13}{16}$ of me belongs to water, and sun. Inextricable
from the dusty smell of sage ringing a man-made lake.
Some part of me is always itching for the cold burn of red skin
in the middle of winter. All I want is lime dust
and those $\frac{6}{8}$ my grandparents used to call Sunshine.