

Fall 1984

The Rain Between Us

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The Rain Between Us

How many times your small wrists
like the narrow ankles of deer vanish

into the underbrush! Impenetrable
as winter rain

at airports, saying goodbye
panic: the swift whites of your eyes
roll out of sight,

brown animal haunches shudder
and move away.

Under a whisper of dry leaves
like razors

the rain between us falls
always cold, at a distance

that is no one's fault
or everyone's, why feelings

wear gloves, hide themselves
at the far edge of the forest . . .

I beg you to come nearer.

Years ago, at the hospital
when Mother was dying we embraced

just barely, shy of each other as two horses
standing in a cold field.

Perhaps we were too close
growing up,

perhaps I frightened you with my bright
older sister's
chatter.

Since then there have been long silences,
caves in echoing woods,

but now there are steel traps
in the far off, trembling country
you ran away from us to live in

I'm still frightened, it's the same thing,
the animals are still at it,

snarling over the white body
of an elegant city this time

with bombs chattering, blind tanks
you're caught all over again, don't you see

when we meet next time, in the open
at long last let me say it

in my own voice, naked
as the raw sounds of home,

Come back to your life and live it
before you lose it take hold of it

with your two hands that are not hooves
nor weapons either, but sisters
that talk, that lift things together.