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Heart of Ash

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HEART OF ASH

A boy crouched
In the low branches
of a tree the sky above
empty of flight

The boy said I want an apple
And he climbed down

He followed a road to the orchard
Where an old woman stood
Beneath the apple tree

She was his mother

There was no fruit on the tree
But round bee hives hung
From each branch
And silent there were no bees

She said
They were dying
He heard the bees in her voice

She put her hand to her belly
And the boy heard them now in her body
In the cage of her body

She said
But you haven't come to see me
And the boy looked away

She said Look
And she opened the skin of her arm
And bees flowed from her
Yellow blood spilling into her hand
The hundred moving wings

Couldn't fly the stream of bees
Fell to the ground
And then she was falling
Her body fell away

A cloud of bees it broke like rain
On the earth

But her heart remained in the air
It was a hive
Heart of paper heart of ash

And he took it from the air
Broke it open and inside was the apple
He put it to his mouth
And took the first stinging bite