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Milk

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MILK

From time to time the placid
shrugs its shoulders—
earthquakes, for instance—

but still the world
depends
on placid things' resistance.

The fire requires
its trees,
the sea its hem of boulders,

the wind
without its halls
would howl in silence;

for everything that
flares up, something lowers
itself, digs in

for an existence
in the long haul, slows.
It may well be the placid knows

its worth. The cow whose
calf was taken
eats again—but do not guess

too quickly at the meaning
in the red hips' unbent squareness,
the large-jawed head

half-buried in the grass:

with each fly's weightless
bite, the thick skin shivers.

The placid, unlike us,
lives in the moment.
Something must;

like chairs,
or painted dressers,
on an earth where loss

is so all present
that we drink it without thinking,
blue-white in its early morning glass.