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Rising Smoke

Jane Miller

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RISING SMOKE

My brother disappears with his lights on,
my mother, at eighty, travels between
the heavy rains of the four seasons.
What I imagine happens sets not one inn in place,

nor puts our dead father to rest. The air is chilly,
despite a feast and a fire. I'm the one to say it
about myself, I feel like a servant wading across
relieved of possessions.

One obeys nature and thinks of the rest of the journey
in straw sandals and paper hat. The leaves larger
and the light longer. I could do it in my sleep,
my head a roadway peppered with mountain passes.

It doesn't hurt to write, it's as difficult as learning
to read a glance. The head of a fawn? Shark teeth?
A dream is snatched from me, then emptiness,
its carved door broken into.

An afternoon of one glimpse of a narrow bay.
A guardhouse stands at the end
of a bridge. Sweep of lute strings.
This is the spot grown children abandoned

their aging mothers,
a young man kissed his love goodbye on the forehead,
a young woman returned without composing a single line
an old woman not in her own bed.