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Circus

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CIRCUS

*Beauty with inner implications...
is beauty that makes an artist of the viewer.*

— Soetsu Yanagi

That was a storied summer.
Hawks were haggard
and the girls untamed.

I heard them before I saw them.
Round the bend
of a hoof-worn lane,
two women, nut-brown and naked
to the waist, wielding axes
in dazzling syncopation.

We do not want some stories to end
because the pause that ensues
will be endless.

We want the harrier hawk
to keep circling the rabbit forever.

We want there to be a next birth
when a child has died,
a next wife, next lover, next finch
for the cage left empty,
next pup in the house out back
with the wrong name over the door.

But a new story
will not end that silence.

These trees, those women,
my father and mother,
perhaps even their disappointments,
their regrets, will be reborn
—as paths in the garden,
as beardtongue and penstemon by the path,
as blue butterflies or clouds of smoke.

I remember them standing,
glistening, and also lying down.
They are good ghosts
and I am warm.