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Mercy

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MERCY

The woman sits and watches a forest grow
until she's a girl on a patio leafing out,
her sandy skin burnt by a snow late
in the night. Her husband stands in the middle
of winter without beginning on edge and pours
pitchers of cool water from the top of a cliff
down onto his sex, like a young leather flower
caught in a simple snare on a game trail.

It's September and back in Eastern Oregon
a cold-front has dropped the highs into the 40's.
In his woodshop, my father planes a strip of elm
for a new door, while my mother and the dog
move from room to room in the small house
where the wood stove warms everything, even
a summer that dies again and again without us.