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At Forty Foot

Emily Oliver

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AT FORTY FOOT

Women already swimming
easily, their arms petal
around their swim caps, older

than twice the years I've rooted in
the earth. Afraid for my blood
in its blue stalks, of shock

and drowning. Older than
the woman I am the grown daughter of,
or than the man in the novel

though he also swam here. Salt bastard
-cold water spluttered the rock lip.
Swimmer, so brave!

The swimmer laughs,
un-depleted. Fortified,
for water...inches of fat.

I gather the spill of my stomach.
I too am considerable. Swimmer,
these hips are a furnace

for warmth; I've welcomed in
the stranded. I've washed
a woman with cancer standing in a shower,

hand on my shoulder
so she did not fall. I was held up
with a pistol. I've plundered myself

more elegant stories—I saw that flood
rising and grabbed at what
I've wanted. The swimmer

and I climb the cliff side
jump. No. You are just a little *slip* of a girl.
She is in these waters everyday.