Mercy

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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.