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At the Pond, Last Vacation, Leaf-Tremble, What Happened

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remembered one of the hundred country hit
tunes he wrote, and how those wise-acres

in Nashville still owe him millions. Long
overdue. He's nobody's uncle, but of all

of us, he's the only one who looks up
when the rain starts on the tin roof.

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At the Pond

I want the geese to stand beside me,
softly speaking, stroking my hair.
One might lay his blazoned head
on my lap. I'd pet the wild thing
and he would let me, the others
cooing ungoosably in their joy.
We of kindly natures would stay
there, the water bounding in
the narrowest of wavelets, every
small stone seeming smooth, and all
the world – the dirt I sit in, the dust
insinuating itself into the leather laces
of my shoes, would be preening, graceful
and open: the many males, the females
in their pale brown abstraction, the goslings
swimming simply on their own.

Last Vacation

1

In the shower I take pleasure in washing my hair: luxuriant, burly, thickly nested in the comb of my fingers. I think of his toes, their perfect roundness. I think of the power in his hands.

2

You don't worship me, he says,
eyes on the marsh, arms stretched
on the table before him. *I love you*,
I answer behind him, my palm brushing
his hair. *I want to be adored*, he says.
I kiss the top of his head lightly.
I love you, and now I am stroking
his shoulder. This very shoulder. This hair.
It is late afternoon. The beach still clings
to my thighs. I am smiling. The tide in
its fragrance continues to turn.

Leaf-Tremble

I was sleeping in blue seersucker pajamas,
and that sleep was a deep forgetting. Waking
was thunder, a policeman pounding the door.
The sea came in to the shore outside the window.
As it always did. As it never did. I trembled,
frail as the blue body of leaf-vein, a girl torn
like a plum from the branches, barely ready.
My father is dead. I pressed sweet hunger
to juice with my thumbnail and left myself
there. The face of fear was a human face,
a deep organic surprise. No one could
take me now.

What Happened

1

A cloud came. A moon rose
across my cornea. And set there.
The cells of my eyeball resisted.
I believed in the enterprise,
part and parcel. They were smart.
It was I who couldn't see.

2

There were men I clothed
 in the pleasures of my body.
 Their yearnings smooth, nascent,
 their foreheads, their hands,
 the cups of their rough chins.
 My breasts, my hips consistently
 working unseen. I was a puppet
 of my body, a fuselage, a pretty
 compendium of working parts.

3

Clot. Don't clot. Beneath my skin
 patches of bruise were blooming.
 At the slightest insistence. Even
 the press of a white cotton sock
 could turn my delicate, my serviceable,
 my unsuspecting ankle blue.

4

I breathed my hands, I breathed
 especially my arms, the fine blonde
 hairs that grow there. Scent.
 How it occurs to the body. I was
 burned into being, hardened
 as amber, hardened as a teat
 into meaning. *Eat and be made
 of eating.* Scent of vineyard.
 Scent of dewlap and dung.