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Watershed's Beginning

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

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Watershed's Beginning

We cannot go any faster
down this dirt road
lined with sunflowers
and sparrowhawks who shake
from the harvested wheatfields.

I cannot go any faster
through myself through you.

Across the field

Earlier I touched her back
A rattlesnake between the rocks.
She grasped and stopped our steps.

That was before we drank
from the spring under the cedar.

Lightning over the plains

Before we walked - four friends
across the field of dry grass
of cactus and wind that sweeps
our hair and pours my cotton skirt
around me like a dance.

Clouds broken into streaks.

Before you walked (unnoticing
I had touched you) to check
the oil and open the car door.

The engine begins, then motion.

I am told I cannot
spill us into words.
Rain comes in its own time.

And I cannot wait
-a still life portrait offering
fruit and flowers
or a cup of tea
that cools to nothing-

The temporary, the permanant:
I tell you we are not doors
but places filled with holes.

The space ahead opens.

(continued)

The beauty of this place
where prairie turns (cedar to pine)
to mountains stays with us
as we drive - speaking of maps
(not places)

Your distance builds clouds.

The rain begins, hard against
the palm of the earth. We cannot
go any faster. Four of us,
shielded in this car: the birds
who migrate home. Nothing stops
our wings. You watch the road.

Can I take your hand?

This is where the watershed begins.
Tears from the sky opening the soil
Far, ahead, the faint curve of a rainbow.
Watching in silence: asking
and answering the land.

Here is the way home.