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## Actaeon in New Hampshire

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*Actaeon in New Hampshire*

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It is raining again, and puddles are filling  
with goldfish; they turn in circles, stare upwards  
at the vast sky. My left shoe is drenched to the sock  
as I again walk through the forest with you.  
I would say we are “walking together” but you are far  
ahead of me, sure-footed, trouncing through mud.  
The game we play is who can maintain their sanity,  
the rules made up as we go along. A dandelion  
at the side of the path, its forehead leaning against the bramble,  
has not a thought free from the stench of nostalgia.  
And the raindrops flailing from the branches  
are merciless; compelled by icy wind they fall in fits  
of derisive laughter, fall laughing.  
The score now is three to one: three for you, one for you.  
I plan my comeback by contemplating the goldfish,  
such simple vertebrates, spines softer than cherry twigs.  
Crouched among the blackberries,  
cursing the Pope for his boundless compassion,  
I spy her, sad doe, face painted with melancholy,  
white tail ripened and weary.  
The rain pauses. A cricket mutters its evening prayers.