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## After Winter

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## AFTER WINTER

when we think we have borne  
everything, we walk to the park to watch  
salmon batter upstream, their lips  
spoil over spiked underbites,  
shanks ruby-bright with decay. Better  
than any of us they understand  
that to compose something beautiful,  
you must be very hungry. On one side  
of the bridge they teem, waiting without  
knowing for the man in the dam-house  
to open the gate between the river  
and the swollen ovary of the Sound.  
The grave-hearted among us drop lines  
to water. Dogs strain their leashes,  
crazy from the smell of meat turning.  
Our lovers take our hands and tell us  
they are leaving, their fingers  
a hot, brittle shell. Later we lie down  
in the park with a bottle of booze  
and a bottle of medicine. We are young  
and are supposed to feel better.  
When a neighbor passes on the path,  
black hair skull-tight, round glasses  
planetary in stuttered street lamps, we turn  
toward water. He sees us or he doesn't.  
In the starting rain the silvered street  
pebbles away into what came before.