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The Roots Are Horizontal Ladders

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THE ROOTS ARE HORIZONTAL LADDERS

across the path

climbing one rung to the other
my feet find their way

my son is a stranger to me
his eyes are giant pools
of wet stones

I want him to be kind.

How can something so tall
sway and keep its balance?

The birch lean together
in their turning shade

I find the urge to
categorize everything
the names of trees and animals
what we mean
to one another

red gooseberry
red of the fruit that opens yellow
cleanly broken under a wheel
red that is swollen and spiny and ripe

Every day you get closer to leaving me
and it is as terrifying
as finding
a cardinal wing