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Today the pear trees wrapped in shawls of air, the wind that bends them booming with frogs— but I am not wearing a new blue suit. My hair is not perfumed spikes of black that poke out under a white skull-cap. This day each year the Law added our sins to our fathers’.

All the Jewish boys were absolved like trees that drop their foliage all at once. We’d play at prayer and fasting, at emptying and the chest-thumping of grown men till sundown. A few remaining leaves scratch and their dry cough recalls the drone of men in prayershawls, the tinkle of glasses later, a table heaped with herring and sardines.

My heart catches. Netted, it bangs louder. We stiffen, our yearly rings unbreathable armor without forgetfulness. Without memory we repeat our fathers, slip and vanish around the trunks of pear trees. I fast today. I walk out past the unpruned orchard, nostalgia’s branches clacking.