Flashlight Tag

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FLASHLIGHT TAG

I am the one with the flashlight, in a sweat, trusting my feet through the trees. This was my sister's idea, gathering us all to play flashlight tag like when we were kids. Now we are grown up, with our own kids, and still, everyone's hiding in the soft leaves. My tooth of light casts sudden black trunks, breaks open the grass, jolts rocks along the shore. I remember myself curled between two trees, the Indian feet of the big boys anywhere at all, the whole world moving in against me, small, turned nose down to the clicks and shuffles of the night. There used to be a loon in Osborne's pond, its cold yodel floating across the road to where I lay. I am still curled inside the soft nest of myself, even while I aim the radical light . . . I flush out my sister Linnie first, and she takes my hand like a child, and we feed each other the old fears, half laughing, running. Then we wait, bound the way we've always been, not wanting to stir up the night. Let the others fall asleep, or come on back to the fire by themselves. It has taken us years to hold hands.
again, to remember how plainly
the darkness sees us, always
as if we were eight years old,
the battle of our parents rising
and crashing through the night,
and we far under the covers,
turned breath to breath, one breath.

If I Were a Swan

I would ride high
above my own white
weight. I would ride
through the lightening
of the earth
and the darkening,
stillness and turbulence
coming on in the core
of me, and spreading
to the hard rain,
to the dazzle. Leaves
would turn, but I
would keep my eyes
in my head, watching
for grasses. This
is what I would know
deeply: the feathering
of my bones
against the bank.
For the rest,
I would be the easiest
wave, loving just enough
for nature's sake.
The world would move
under me and I would
always be exactly