Escaping Eden

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ESCAPING EDEN

Maybe they don’t want to remember where exactly,
or maybe they can’t because everything
down miles of coastline is very new,
or else it wears the same abandoned face
of salt and sun bleached neglect.

But somewhere is where they stayed,
the tiny room with the huge radio receiving only one station
and the sink dripping all night
while on the bed they made my beginning.

My mother remembers the bus ride down from Tallahassee,
how a woman passed out from heat
and they laid her in the aisle where the curves
in a constant, careless insistence rocked her head
no.
My father remembers
a dock, which even then
was leaning
and the tide
draining the flats
until the view
was all of mud
and the low rough mounds
of oyster shells.
They watched the sunset
in misery.
The mosquitoes knew
as they did
it was too hot
to be inside.

Living north of here
I come along this road
and have to make up
my own place
of beginning.
I have gone against
their lack
of memory.
I have picked
an abandoned barracks
in the tall grass
under pines.

If there is a pier
it is hidden beyond the woods.
If there is a sunset
it comes here no longer
on the water
but through the trees.
I feel like the woman
on the bus
shaking my head
without knowing it,

not because I want
to unmake myself
but because
even if they could
tell me the truth,
it would be
here, among the scattered
bricks of an old
foundation post
and the rusty nails
lying in the sand
like petrified worms.

I can see
how the old pines
are twisted from a storm
and all are bent
away from the sea.
I can hear the insects
whose wings buzzing
are here the same
as they always have been
everywhere.